Canadian Freelance Writers: Characteristics and Issues

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In 1973, British Columbian writer Eric Nicol wrote: "The tested formula for becoming rich as an author is to write regularly to an uncle who is dying of a surfeit of oil wells." This excellent report documents in considerable detail the general truth of that statement as it applies to freelance writers. The situation is unfortunate, to say the least, because the creativity of these writers is in many ways the very lifeblood of Canadian magazines, book publishing, performing arts and even broadcasting. One of my goals as Minister is to make sure that in future Canadian writers will receive an economic reward commensurate with their contribution to Canadian culture and society. And it is useful and informative studies such as this one which provide us with the vital data we need to formulate policies for this purpose.

Francis Fox

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The writer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in this study, and for any errors, omissions or faulty judgements that may appear herein.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"A freelance writer is someone who has a typewriter and a working mate"

Anonymous

"Most professional writers in Canada are either part-time journalists or full-time employees of schools, universities, governments and publishers, or suffer poverty between odd jobs found to keep creditors from the door."

Margaret Atwood
Book Publishing and Public Policy Conference, 1981

Many Canadians tend to think of the freelance writer's lifestyle in one of two romanticized ways. At one end of the spectrum are those who see it as unencumbered by the drudgery of a nine-to-five routine and replete with opportunities for travel, guest appearances on television and radio, and substantial incomes. This is the view usually held by those whose exposure to writers is limited to high-profile media stars. At the other end of the spectrum are those who see writers as living in near poverty, cut off from the benefits of unemployment insurance, vacation pay or pension plans, certain only of receiving countless form-letter rejections for their work.

In fact, there is some basis for both perceptions. Writers are characterized by a diversity of background, training, experience and income. It is these diversities that are explored in the following pages.

This report documents the results of one of three studies undertaken to provide information on the status of Canada's creative artists. These studies, which focus on writers, on visual artists and on actors, are analyses of data

collected as part of the federal Cultural Statistics Program. The program is run jointly by the Education, Science and Culture Division of Statistics Canada and the Arts and Culture Branch of the Department of Communications.

This study employs survey data collected in October, 1979, and applies to a large sample of freelance writers in Canada. While offering a close-up view of writers working in particular fields, such as poetry, fiction or drama, it also paints a collective portrait of the Canadian writing scene by revealing many details about the circumstances surrounding the freelancer's life. No study to date has approached the task from such a global perspective, although numerous writers' associations have surveyed sectors of the writing community through membership studies over the years.

Rather than exploring one theme in detail, the study addresses a wide range of topics. This enables the delineation of such aspects as the demographic characteristics, education, training, careers and income found in the writing community. Comparisons between writers and the general population shed further light on this vital component of the Canadian cultural mosaic.

Highlights of the study

1. Although some writers make a good living from their craft, writing on a freelance basis is not generally a lucrative pursuit: 50 per cent of full-time writers earned less than $7,000 from writing in 1978. In general, the writing income of freelancers was considerably lower than that of wage-earning Canadians.

2. Many freelancers supplement their incomes with other jobs, often as professors or teachers, or as salaried writers: 28 per cent of full-time writers and 78 per cent of part-time writers held other paying jobs.

3. In general, male writers earned considerably more money from their writing in 1978 than female writers.

4. A comparison of incomes of writers for the various media shows that the median income of full-time broadcast writers was $15,000, while the corresponding figures for book authors and for newspaper and/or magazine writers were $3,000 and $4,100, respectively. In other words, writers whose largest single source of writing income came from either books or newspaper and/or magazines generally earned less than broadcast writers.

5. Freelance writers were concentrated in central Canada in 1979. Seventy-one per cent were living in either Ontario or Québec. Ontario, in particular, had a disproportionate number of writers, claiming almost half of all full-time freelancers.

6. It was found that a substantial proportion of writers have university degrees. A considerable number (42 per cent) however indicated that they had no formal literary training after high school.

7. Many of those surveyed were involved in more than one field of writing (e.g. fiction and poetry), but the principal area of many freelance writers (48 per cent) was non-fiction writing.

8. When asked about possible measures to develop the literary field in Canada, many book writers felt that improved public education and appreciation of Canadian literature was most important.

9. Newspaper and magazine writers felt that access to grants for non-fiction writing would significantly improve their situation as freelancers in Canada.

10. Script writers felt that writing success in Canada is limited by the tendency of theatres to produce established plays rather than new works and by the lack of available outlets for their work.

Data Considerations

The data in this study are derived from the 1979 Survey of Writers undertaken by Statistics Canada. A fundamental problem with such surveys is the definition of the target population. Is a freelance writer anyone who writes for publication, or has done so in the past? Should more stringent criteria be applied for the results to be meaningful and useful?

For the purposes of the 1979 Survey of Writers, the target population was defined as people, who between January 1974 and October 1979, had written one or more of the following:

- at least one book of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that was published or in the process of being published for the general retail market
- at least one script for stage, cinema, radio or television that was produced or broadcast (excluding work as a paid employee of a producing agency)
- at least three published short stories or poems
- ten or more articles, columns or reviews published in a newspaper or magazine (excluding work done as paid employee of such publications)

The definition of a full-time freelance writer is also important to the following analysis. For the survey, a full-time writer was defined as someone who worked more than 30 hours a week as a freelancer during 1978.

Eighteen writers' associations and unions, with a total membership of 4,479, participated in the survey. Members were grouped into two categories: one consisting mostly of poets, playwrights and newspaper or magazine freelancers; the second consisting mainly of book authors. To ensure reliable estimates at

the regional level, the two groups were further subdivided by region. A probability sample of 2,103 writers was then sent questionnaires, to which 62 per cent responded.

The returns indicated that a number of questionnaire recipients did not satisfy the survey's definition of a writer. Consequently, when weighted to the level of the relevant population, the survey results apply to 3,185 freelancers.

Most of the charts presented in this study place writers in full-time or part-time categories, depending on the degree of writing activity they engaged in during 1978.

Percentage distributions are also shown. The number of writers represented by these percentages varies according to the response rate for individual topics discussed. However, the aggregate (weighted) number of full-time writers in the survey was 861; 2,031 were writing on a part-time basis.*

* Note that 148 writers were not active in 1978, and 145 did not indicate whether they were full-time, part-time or inactive.

2.1 – REGION OF RESIDENCE

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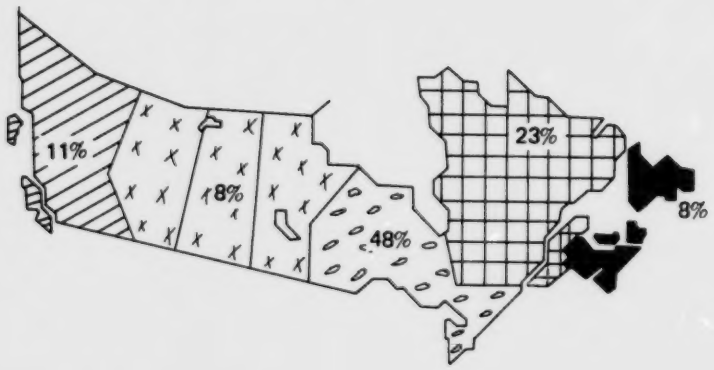
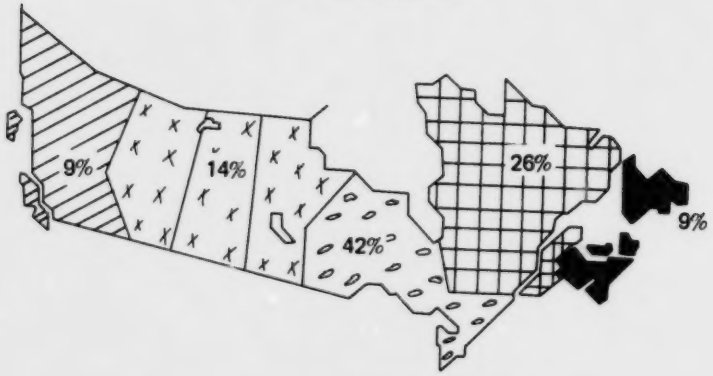
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

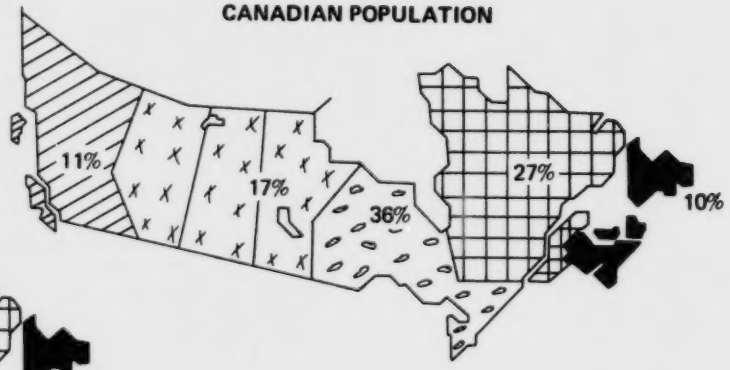
FULL-TIME WRITERS



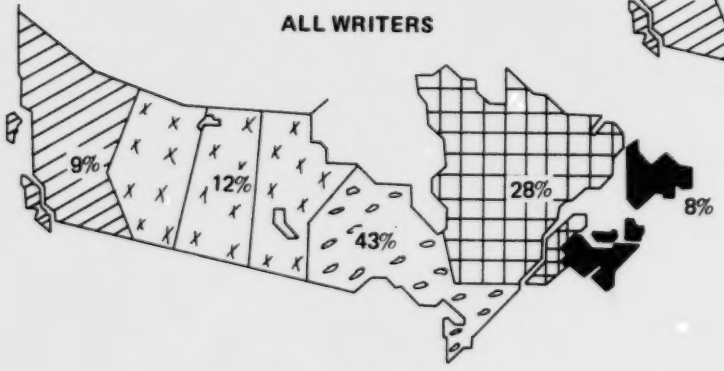
PART-TIME WRITERS



CANADIAN POPULATION



ALL WRITERS



LEGEND

- Atlantic Region
- Quebec
- Ontario
- Prairies
- British Columbia

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

2. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Writers concentrated in central Canada

Through their work, (Canadian) writers often reflect the issues, problems and values of the region in which they live. It is interesting, therefore, to study their regional distribution, and to examine where they tend to locate.

Chart 2.1 shows that the vast majority (71 per cent) of writers surveyed were living in either Ontario or Québec at the time of this survey. It is interesting to compare this regional distribution with the regional distribution of Canada's general population. According to Statistics Canada's 1979 estimates, Ontario was home to 36 per cent of the national population; the survey shows that 43 per cent of Canada's writers were living in Ontario at that time. In Québec the relationship is closer: 27 per cent of the national population and 28 per cent of the writing population was located there. The writing population in all other regions of Canada was under-represented, particularly in the Prairie region - home to 17 per cent of the national population, but only 12 per cent of our writers.

This relationship holds true even when considering the distribution of full-time and part-time writers. Ontario claims the lion's share of full-time writers (48 per cent), and British Columbia's share is equal to its percentage of the general population. In all other regions, writers are under-represented in comparison with the distribution of Canada's national population.

The disparity is in part attributable to the concentration of publishing activities in Ontario, particularly in the Toronto region. Many writers have moved to Toronto to facilitate personal contact with editors and others in the publishing field. In addition, the area offers more opportunities to writers seeking other jobs with which to supplement their writing income. The heavier concentration of radio and television in Montréal and Toronto also encourages writers for these media to locate in central Canada.

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Based on data from
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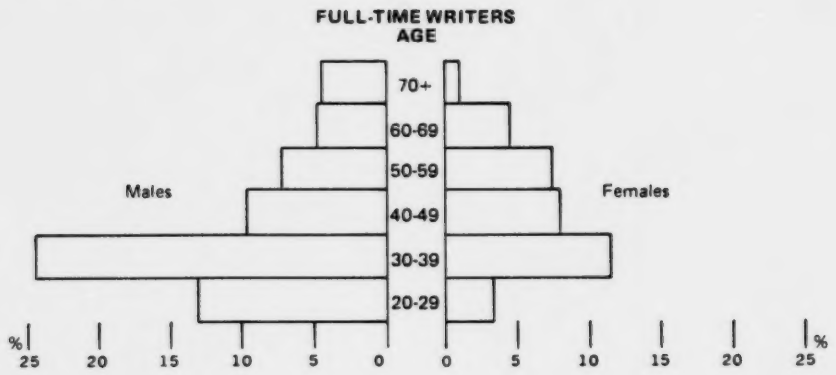
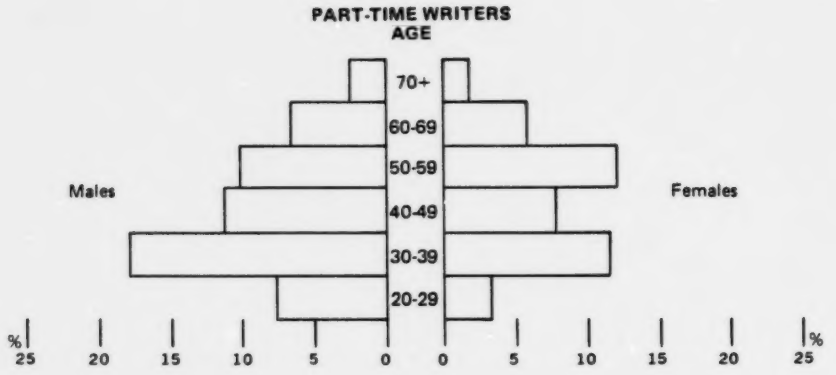
2.2 – AGE AND SEX





(continued on page 22)

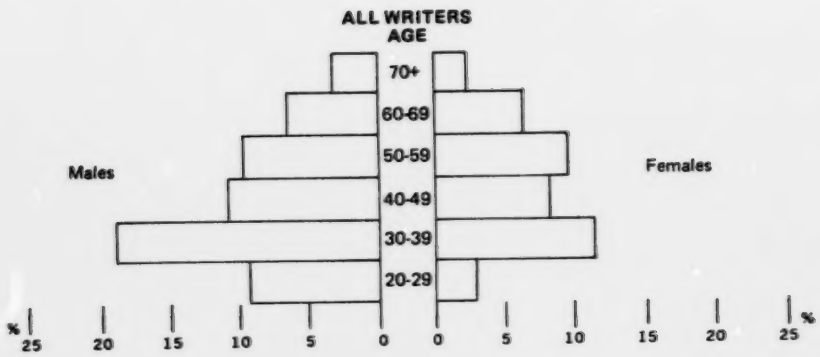
More male writers than female (distribution according to age and sex)

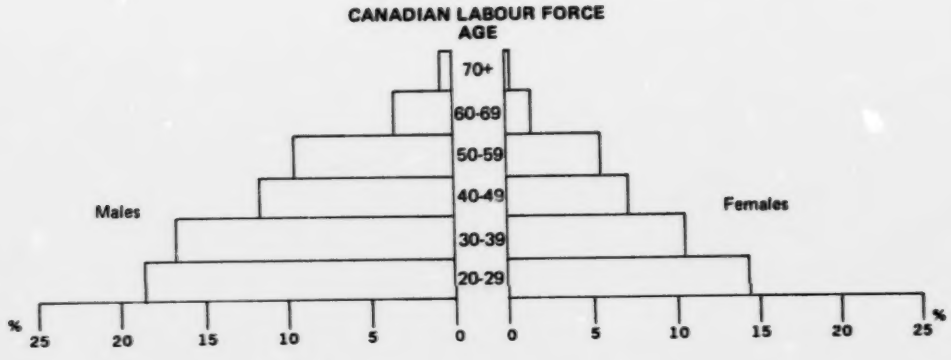
Chart 2.2, which contains population pyramids for full-time, part-time and all writers, enables the reader to visualize their distribution according to age and sex. Population pyramids for Canada (June, 1979) and the Canadian labour force (Labour Force Survey, October, 1979) are also presented.

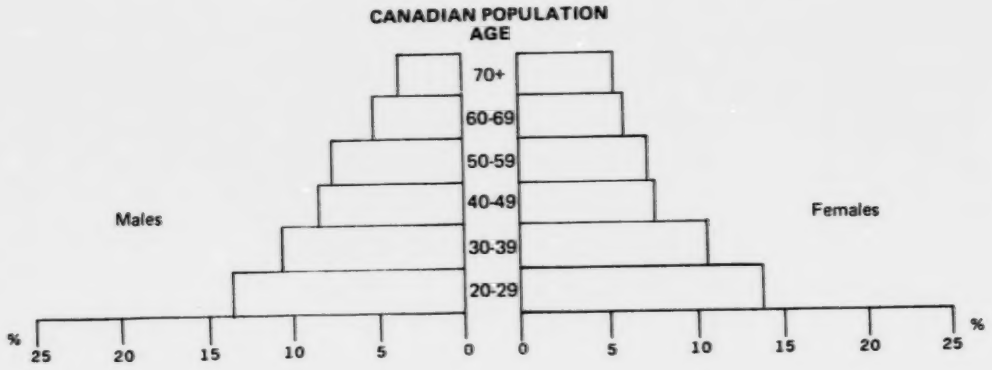
The majority of Canada's writers were men in 1979. In fact, 58 per cent of all writers were men, and if we consider full-time writers only, the percentage climbs to 64 per cent. The preponderance of male writers is particularly evident in the younger age groups (20-29, 30-39), where women are outnumbered by almost two to one. This imbalance is partly due to the withdrawal of some women from the labour force during the prime child-bearing years. After age fifty, the distribution of men and women freelancers remains approximately the same.

The chart also shows that overall male-female distribution differences in the freelance writing profession are similar to those of the labour force in general, which in 1979 comprised 61 per cent men and 39 per cent women.

2.2 – AGE AND SEX (cont'd)







Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Many writers are young, but some continue writing after 70

Pyramid graphs dividing writers by age group start from a narrow base at age 20-29, broaden considerably at age 30-39, then narrow again. About 30 per cent of Canada's writers were between the ages of 30 and 39 in 1979. The small percentage of 20-29-year-olds is partly due to the fact that many potential commercial writers in this age group are still attending university.

Fifty-three per cent of the full-time writers surveyed were under 40 years of age, compared with 41 per cent of the part-time writers. This age distribution aligns roughly with that of the general Canadian population, except for the 30-39 age group, in which writers are over-represented (30 per cent versus 21 per cent) and the 20-29 age group, where the discrepancy is reversed (12 per cent versus 28 per cent). The percentage of male full-time writers aged 30-39 contrasts particularly with that of the Canadian population in general: they make up 25 per cent of the writers, but only 11 per cent of the national adult population.

It is interesting to note that many writers continue to work when in their 60s and 70s. Almost one in five (19 per cent) is over 60; 6 per cent is over 70.

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Based on data from
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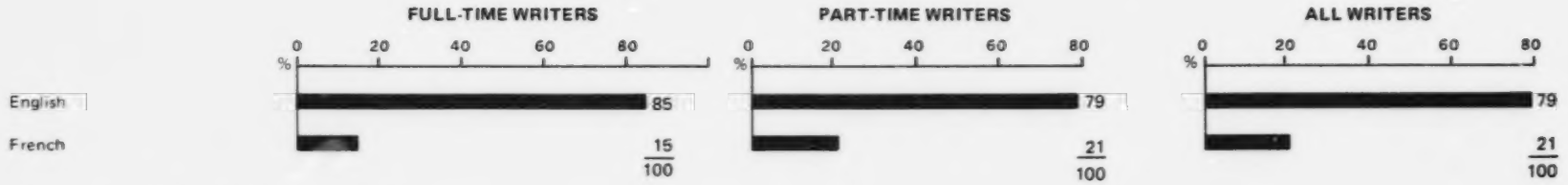
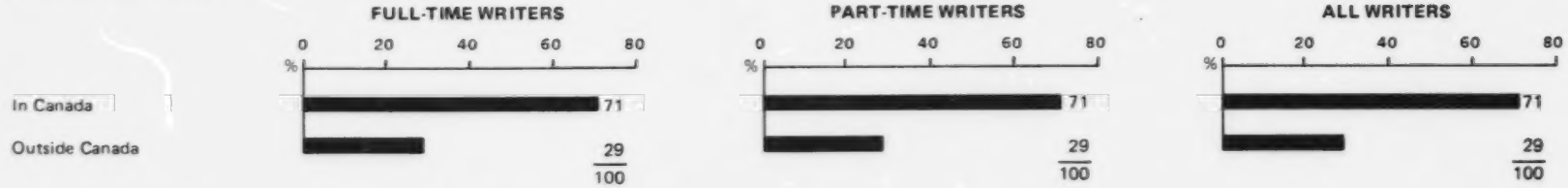
2.3 – WRITING LANGUAGE *



*Excludes a small number of writers who write in a language other than English or French.

2.4 – PLACE OF BIRTH



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Most Canadian writers write in English

Chart 2.3 shows that 85 per cent of full-time, and 79 per cent of part-time freelancers wrote the majority of their work in English. Fewer than 1 per cent wrote in a language other than English or French.

It appears that French writers are under-represented in certain categories of writing. For example, only a small percentage receive most of their earnings from newspapers or magazines; a considerably higher proportion earn their income from other forms of writing, such as books. (Of the total number of writers surveyed, 25 per cent of those who received most of their income from books were writing in French.)

Seventy-one per cent of writers were born in Canada

Twenty-nine per cent of the freelance writers surveyed were born outside Canada. Census figures for 1971 show that only 20 per cent of Canadian adults were born outside Canada. The fact that a considerable number of writers are not native-born Canadians gives credence to the notion that writers (and artists in general) are a nomadic group, and therefore more likely to be recent immigrants. A considerable number may have emigrated to Canada in search of greater freedom of expression than was permitted in their country of origin.

The survey also revealed that although only 71 per cent of the writers were born in Canada, 93 per cent were Canadian citizens in 1979, while the rest were landed immigrants.

3. TRAINING AND CAREER

Canadian writers have high levels of education

Although some successful Canadian writers have very little formal education, 89 per cent of those surveyed in 1979 had received some form of post-secondary education and 64 per cent held a Bachelor degree or higher level degree from a university (see Chart 3.1).

Interestingly, part-time writers tend to have more formal education than full-time writers: 36 per cent had Master or Doctorate degrees, compared with 25 per cent of their full-time counterparts. This reflects, to a certain extent, the tendency of university professors and college teachers to carry on freelance writing on a part-time basis. Only 9 per cent of the part-time writers surveyed have no post-secondary education, as opposed to 17 per cent of the full-time writers.

Compared with the general population, writers are more likely to have completed post-secondary studies. The 1976 Census showed that, among Canadians 20 years and older, 6 per cent had a Bachelor degree, while 2 per cent held a Master or Doctorate degree. The comparable figures for writers are 26 per cent and 32 per cent respectively.

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Based on data from
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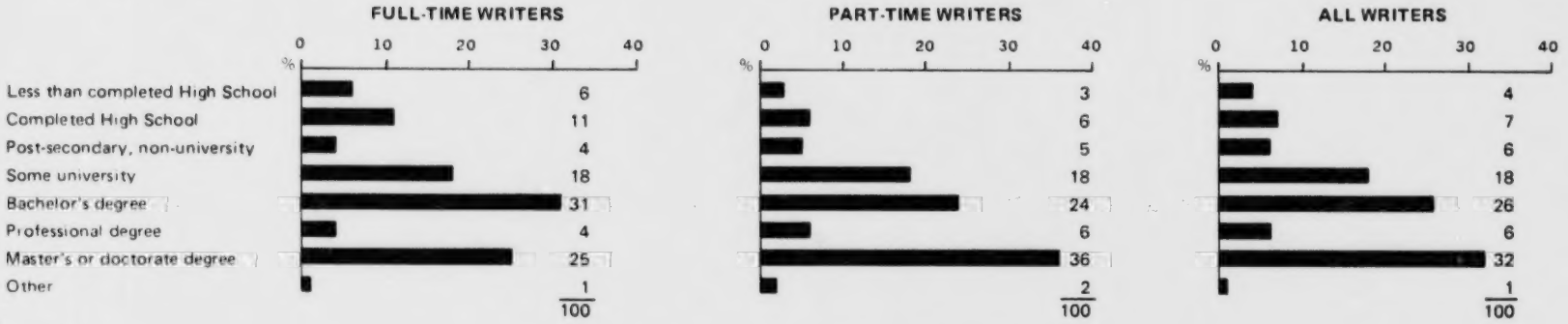
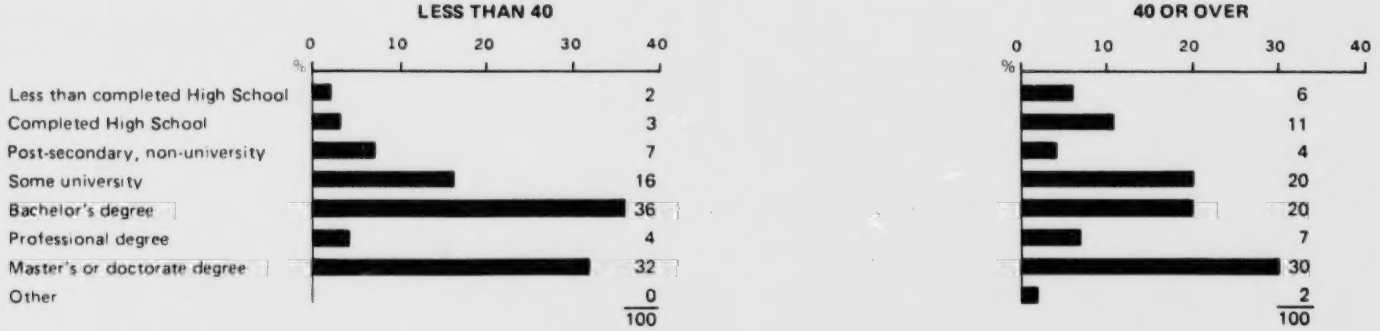
3.1 – LEVEL OF EDUCATION



3.2 – LEVEL OF EDUCATION BY AGE



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Younger writers more educated than older writers

As with many experiences, an education shapes the identity of a writer, and may influence the choice of subjects on which the writer focuses. It is therefore interesting to compare the education of the "young generation" with that of the older one.

In general, writers aged 40 years and older received less formal education than their younger colleagues. The contrast is most striking at the undergraduate level: only 20 per cent of the older writers hold a Bachelor's degree, while 36 per cent of the writers under 40 completed an undergraduate program. The percentage of writers holding a Master's or Doctorate is approximately the same for both age groups, although the older group has a slightly greater tendency to hold a professional degree.

It should be noted, however, that many of the writers and potential writers in the under-40 age group may be working towards an M.A. or a Ph. D. (a phenomenon which is rare among the older generation). Consequently, the current percentages may alter when the younger generation reaches the more senior level.

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Based on data from
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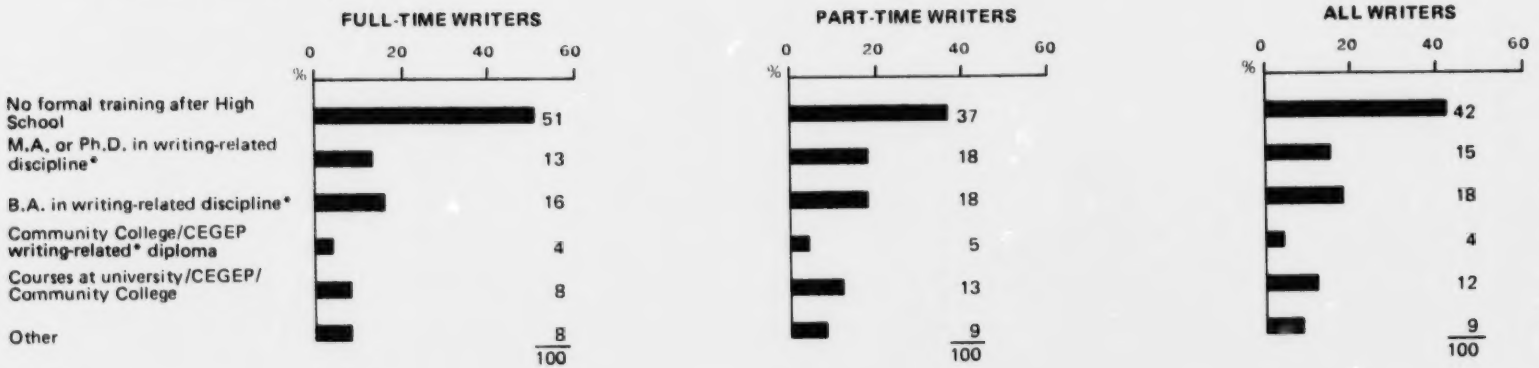
1979

3.3 -- TRAINING AS A WRITER



*Writing-related discipline refers to creative writing, journalism, drama or other related arts programs.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Many writers have no formal training as a writer

Most books on "How to Become a Writer" insist that, although writing ability may be developed through practice and the study of others' works, many aspects of the skill cannot be taught. In fact, 42 per cent of all freelance writers in Canada, and just over half of the full-time writers, indicated that, beyond high school, they had no formal training as a writer.* Many of those who did complete post-secondary education hold a degree in creative writing, journalism, drama or another related arts program: 18 per cent had a B.A. in one of these areas; 15 per cent had an M.A. or Ph. D.

To clarify the value of formal training in a writer's development, the 1979 Survey of Writers asked those who had received such training whether they considered it useful in developing their writing skills. Forty-six per cent of the respondents felt that the training was "very useful", 42 per cent "useful" and 13 per cent "not useful". Full-time writers tended to be more negative about the value of their training: 25 per cent indicated that it was not useful, compared with 8 per cent of the part-time writers.

Another survey question asked whether the training was completed inside Canada. Eighty-two per cent had completed their highest level of training in Canada; only 18 per cent received their training elsewhere.

*The relevant survey question asked "What is the highest level of training as a writer you have completed?" The high percentage of writers reporting that they had no formal training beyond high school may reflect a difficulty in establishing what constitutes "training as a writer".

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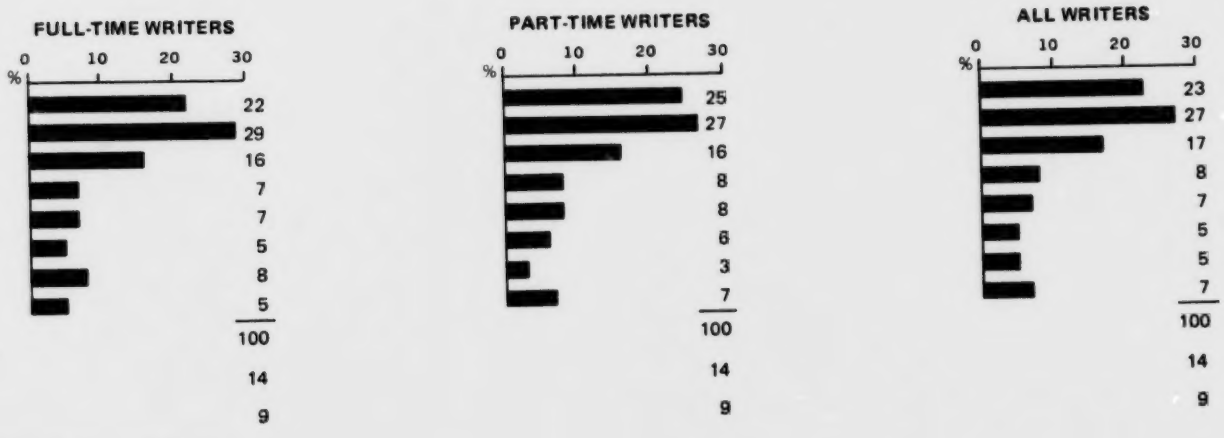
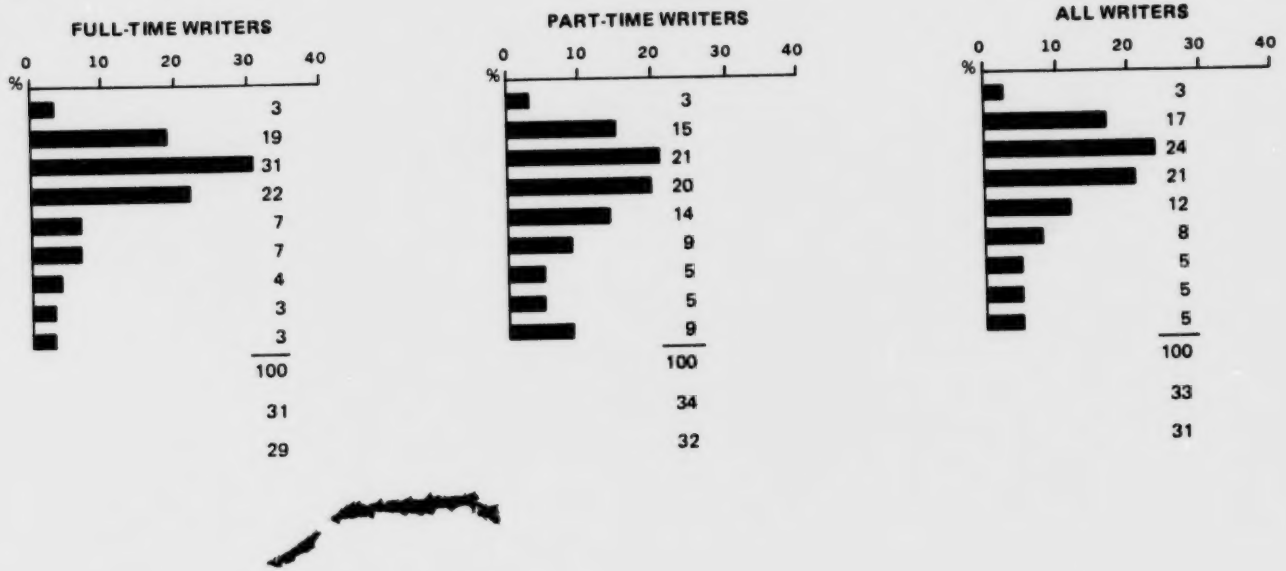
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

3.4 – YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



3.5 – AGE ON RECEIPT OF FIRST WRITING INCOME



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Almost one-half of writers have under ten years' experience

Chart 3.4 shows that half of all the writers surveyed had less than ten years of freelance experience. Two-thirds had been freelancing for less than 15 years, 7 per cent had been freelancing for at least 35 years and 5 per cent had 30 to 34 years of experience.

These results are probably influenced by two factors. First, some writers begin to freelance only after working for varying lengths of time as salaried writers. Second, 43 per cent of the writers surveyed are less than 40 years old.

Most writers begin freelancing at young ages, but some start quite late

As mentioned above, the career patterns of freelance writers vary considerably. Although 65 per cent of those surveyed received their first freelance income before the age of 35, 12 per cent began freelancing between the ages of 35 and 39, and 23 per cent were even older before they entered the profession (see Chart 3.5).

Chart 3.5 also shows that full-time writers tend to start earning freelance incomes earlier than their part-time counterparts. Seventy-five per cent of the full-time writers started before the age of 35, compared with 59 per cent of the part-time writers. This difference probably reflects the preference of the latter group for establishing themselves in another profession before undertaking freelance work.

Further analysis showed that writers who received their principal earnings from books, newspapers and magazines tended to have more experience than those who were primarily script writers.

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Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
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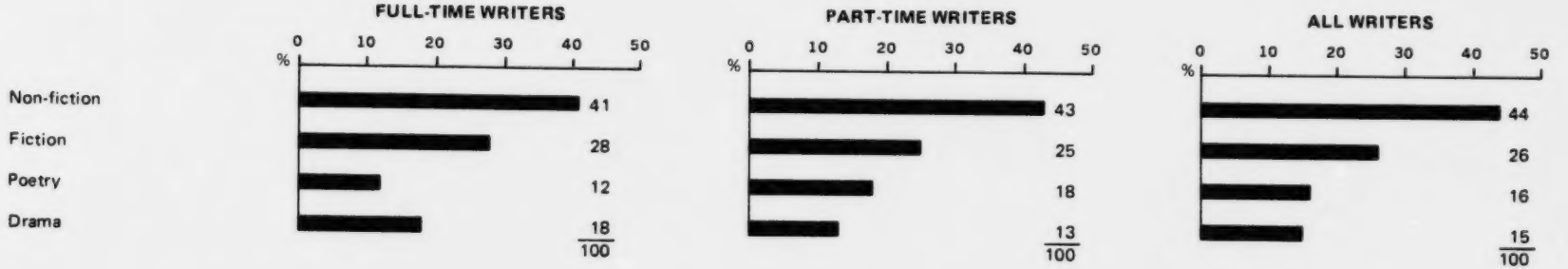
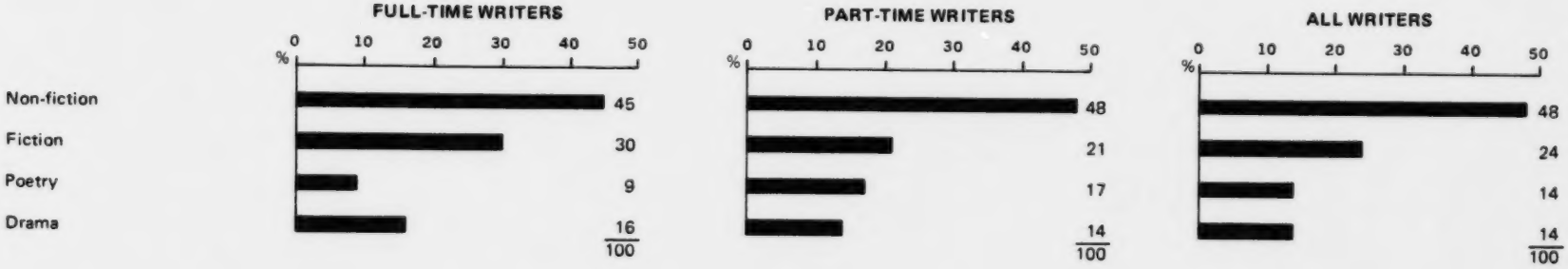
3.6 – CURRENT FIELD OF ACTIVITY



3.7 – PRINCIPAL FIELD OF ACTIVITY



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

More writers are active in non-fiction than in fiction, poetry or drama

Some freelancers write in two or more areas, such as fiction and poetry, while others concentrate on only one. To determine the types of writing that Canadian freelancers engage in, the 1979 survey asked "In which field(s) of writing are you currently active (excluding activities as a paid employee)?". Respondents checked one or more of the categories provided: non-fiction, fiction, poetry or drama.

It is clear from the responses that non-fiction is the speciality of many Canadian writers. Non-fiction was identified as a field of activity 44 per cent of the time; fiction 26 per cent of the time; poetry and drama 16 and 15 per cent respectively.*

The distribution of fields of activity along part-time and full-time dimensions does not differ widely, although full-time writers tend to write more drama and less poetry than part-time writers.

*The base used for calculation of these percentages is the overall participation, i.e., total number of activities in which writers participated, rather than the number of writers.

Non-fiction writing is the main activity of almost one-half of writers

Since survey respondents often indicated that they engage in more than one type of writing, they were asked to identify their principal field of activity within the categories listed.

Indications are that almost half of the respondents were involved primarily in non-fiction writing. Only about one quarter were principally writers of fiction, and just 14 per cent focus their attention on either poetry or drama.

Two interesting features emerge when comparing the primary activities of full-time and part-time writers. First, full-time writers are much less likely to pursue poetry, perhaps because of the low financial return. Second, full-time writers had a much greater tendency (30 per cent versus 21 per cent) to write primarily fiction.

Is a writer's current (1979) project likely to be in the same area as his or her principal field of endeavor? The survey answers are interesting: among full-time writers who listed poetry as a current activity, only 32 per cent indicated that it was their principal field of activity; 40 per cent of the poets were primarily fiction writers.

The responses of part-time writers were quite different: poetry was the major endeavour of 56 per cent of those writing poetry in 1979. Only 26 per cent were principally non-fiction writers, and even fewer (15 per cent) wrote mainly fiction.

Conversely, respondents who were non-fiction writers at the time of the survey showed a much greater tendency to be involved mainly in this area: 80 per cent listed non-fiction as their principal field of writing. Among fiction writers, 51 per cent pursue fiction as their principal activity. Among dramatists, 62 per cent (but only 54 per cent of full-time dramatists) work primarily in drama.

It is likely that these participation patterns reflect, to some degree, the levels of financial return and potential for publication offered in the various fields. Poets, dramatists and writers of fiction are more likely to spend most of their time in other areas of writing.

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Based on data from
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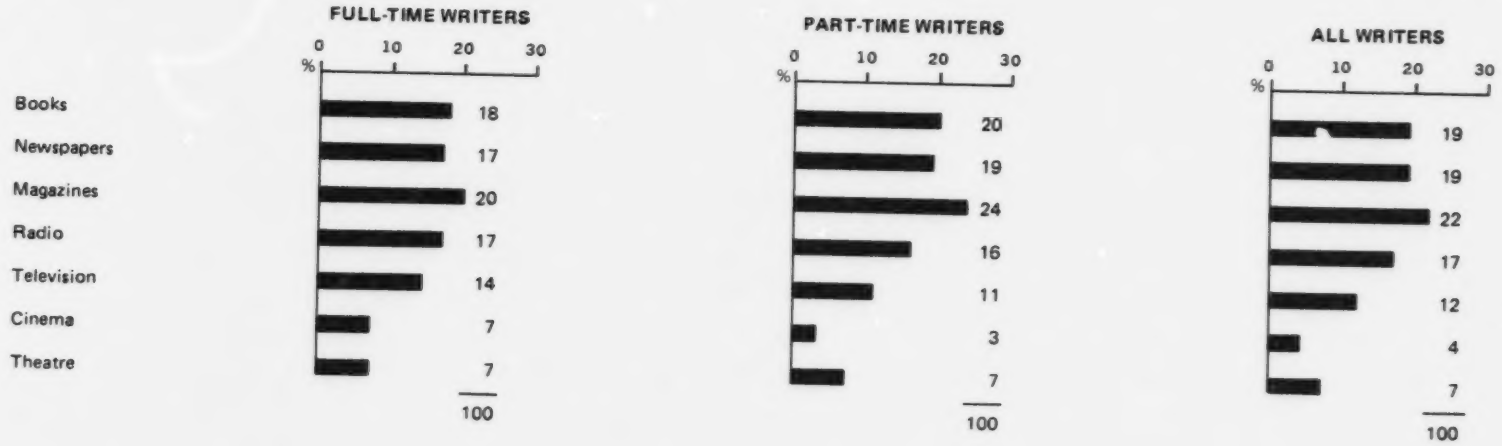
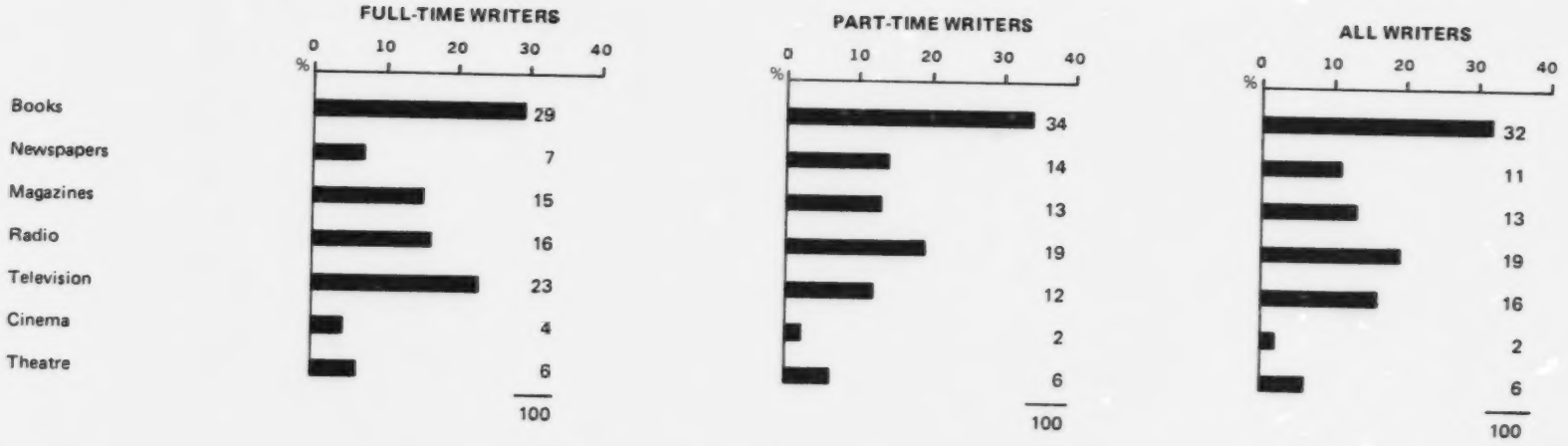
3.2 – WRITING MEDIA



3.9 – MEDIUM OF PRINCIPAL EARNINGS



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Writers' works are published or produced in diverse media

"In which media or forms has your writing ever been published or produced?"

Responses to this survey question indicate that magazines were the largest single outlet for the work of both part-time and full-time writers. Books, newspapers and radio also represented important markets. However, freelance works produced on television or in the theatre were relatively few in number, and those works reaching the cinema screen were even rarer.

The book is the predominant medium of principal earnings

Chart 3.9, which describes the writers' medium of principal earnings since 1974, reveals patterns quite different from participation data presented in Chart 3.8. For almost one third (32 per cent) of the writing population, books are the major income earner. Radio and television rank next, with television a particularly significant income source for 23 per cent of the full-time, but only 12 per cent of the part-time writers. Newspapers and magazines follow but, again, there are major distinctions between full-time and part-time writers: only 7 per cent of the full-time writers received their main earnings from newspapers, versus 14 per cent of the part-time writers. Finally, the theatre was the principal source of income for 6 per cent of the writers, while cinema provided the main income for 2 per cent.

The survey also revealed that:

- Among writers who had published books, a relatively large proportion (54 per cent) also received their principal earnings from books.

- Only about one in five of those who had written for newspapers or magazines rely on these media for their principal earnings.

- Radio and television provide the major source of income for 34 and 37 per cent respectively of those who had written for these media.

- Writers who have written for the cinema tend to rely on television for their principal earnings. Only 14 per cent declared the cinema as their main source of revenue.

- About one in four (23 per cent) of the respondents who had written for the theatre regarded it as their main source of income.

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Based on data from
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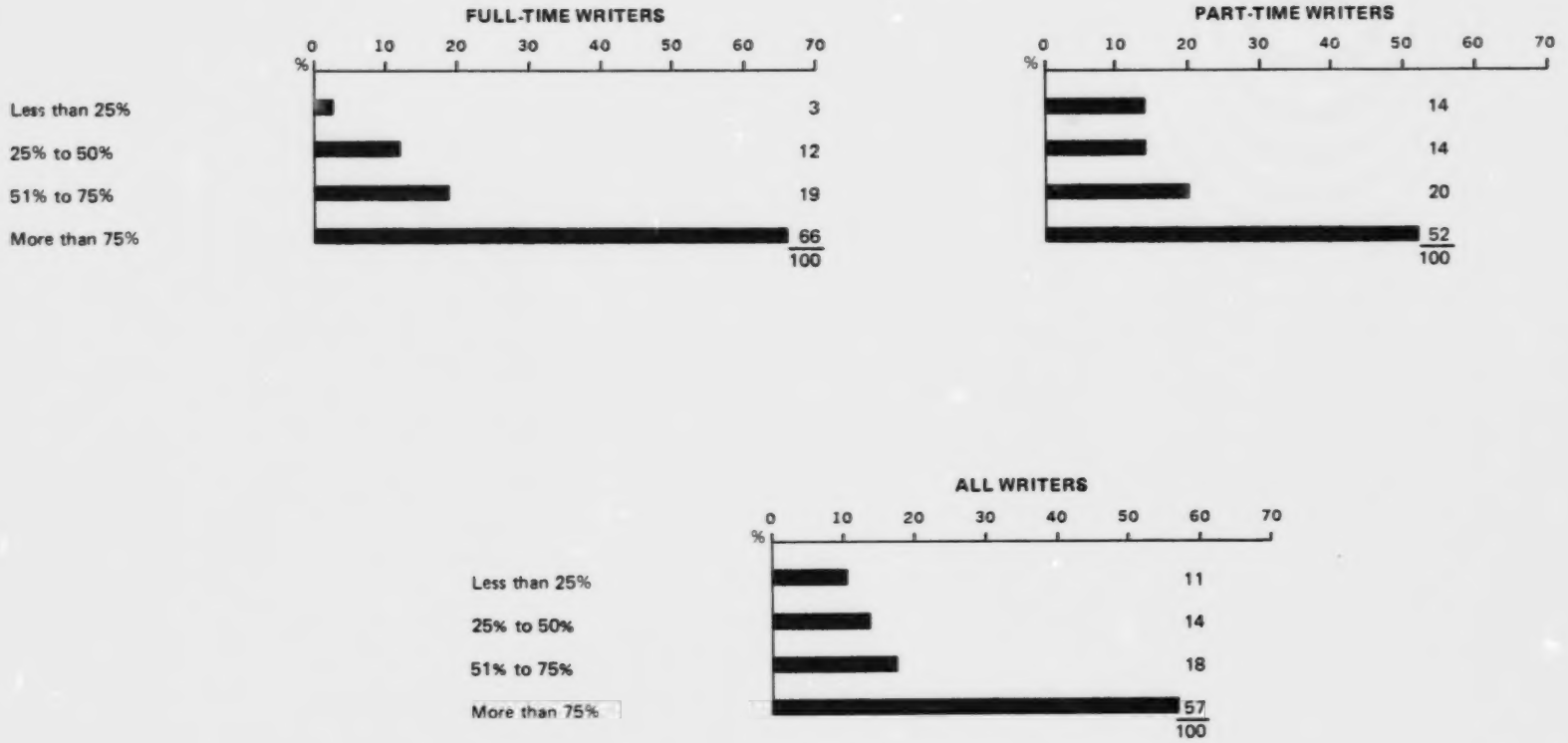
1979

3.10 – PROPORTION OF WORK ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION OR PRODUCTION



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

A large proportion of writers have most of their work accepted for publication or production, but many manuscripts are never published

Nearly every writer has produced manuscripts that have never been published. In fact, some writers report that their best work has never been accepted for publication, or, in the case of script writers, for production.

To gauge the general success of writers at getting their work published, the 1979 survey asked what proportion of each writer's work was accepted for publication or production.

The results (Chart 3.10) show that 57 per cent of all writers had more than three quarters of their work accepted for publication or production. Full-time writers, however, were considerably more successful than part-time writers: two-thirds of the full time writers achieved this rate of success, compared with slightly more than half of the part-time writers. Fifteen per cent of the full-time freelancers and 28 per cent of the part-time freelancers reported that less than 51 per cent of their work had been accepted for publications. In general, full-time writers reported a higher rate of acceptance for publication than their part-time colleagues.

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Based on data from
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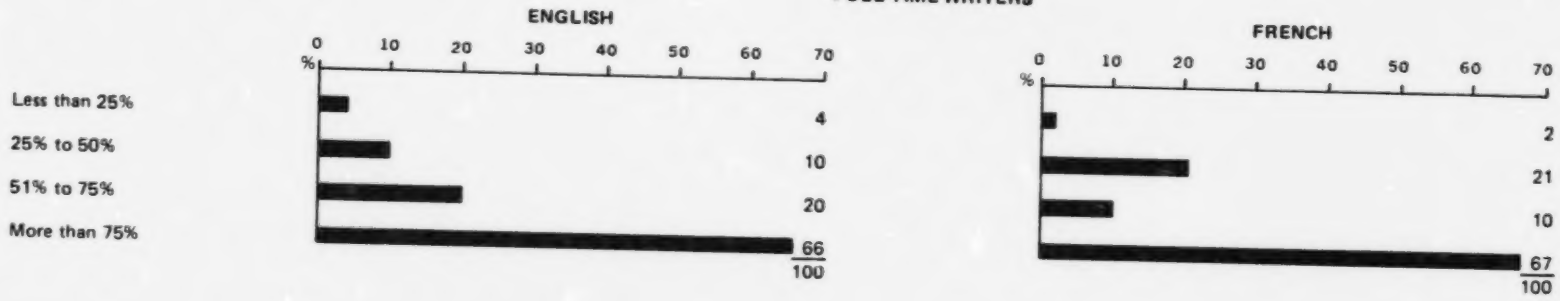
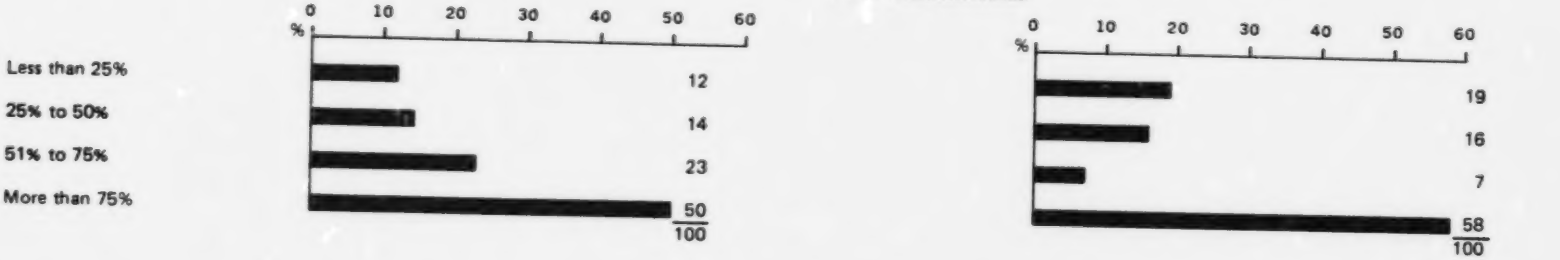
1979

3.11 – PROPORTION OF WORK ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION OR PRODUCTION BY WRITING LANGUAGE

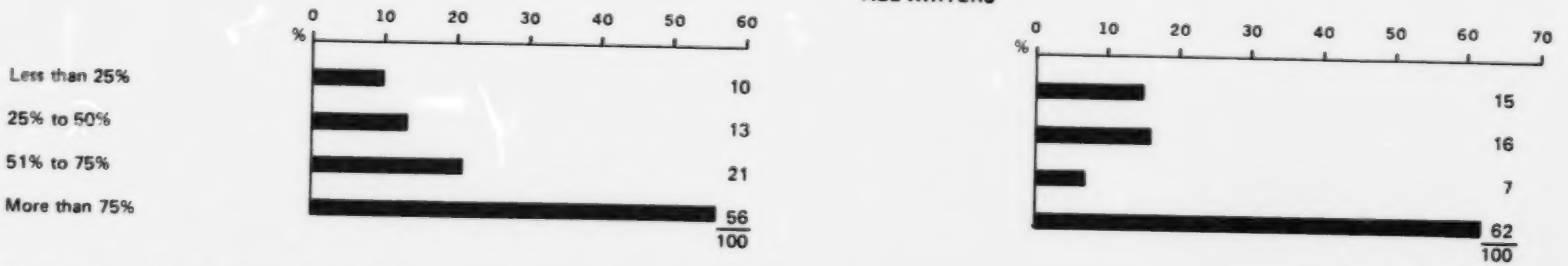
FULL-TIME WRITERS



PART-TIME WRITERS



ALL WRITERS



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Success rates for publication/production by English writers are quite different from those of French writers

The French and English markets for Canadian writing are quite different, in terms of both domestic market size and vehicles available for publication of manuscripts. It has already been shown that French writers are under-represented in relation to population, but how does the success rate of French and English writers compare?

Chart 3.11 reveals that French writers generally achieve either extreme or limited success; very few reported moderate success, which is considered to be a 51 to 75 per cent rate of acceptance for publication.

4. BOOK WRITERS

Fifty per cent of writers have had at least three books published

Respondents were asked to indicate how many of their books had been published. Charts 4.1 to 4.3 show the results for all writers who had at least one book published. It should be stressed that results pertain to all such writers, whether they were primarily book writers, or writing books only as a secondary activity.

The vast majority (87 per cent) of writers in the sub-sample have had one or more books published since the beginning of 1974. The average number of books published was 2.7; the median was 2.0. As one would expect, full-time writers have published more books than part-time writers.

Prior to 1974, a large proportion (44 per cent) of the writers had no books published, a fact reflecting the age composition of the writing population and their concomitant years of freelancing experience.

By analyzing the types of books published, the aggregate number of fiction, non-fiction, drama, and poetry books published can be determined. The analysis reveals that non-fiction books were the most numerous. Books of fiction were next, followed by poetry and drama.

Turning now to the total number of books published, the data show that almost one full-time writer in five has had ten or more books published, while many of the writers in this same group have published one, two or three books. The chart for all writers shows a median book production of 3.0, meaning that 50 per cent of all writers in the sub-sample had at least three books published.

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Based on data from
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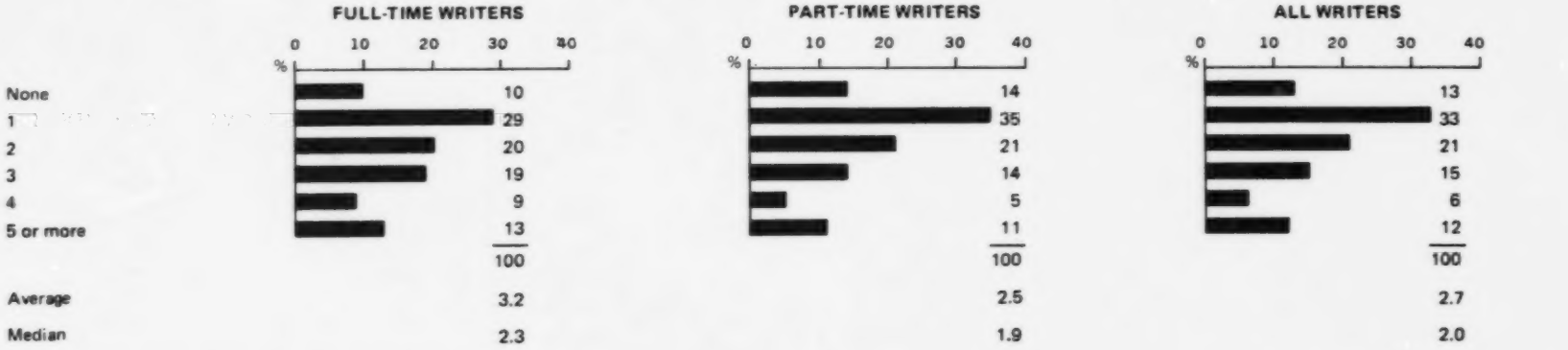
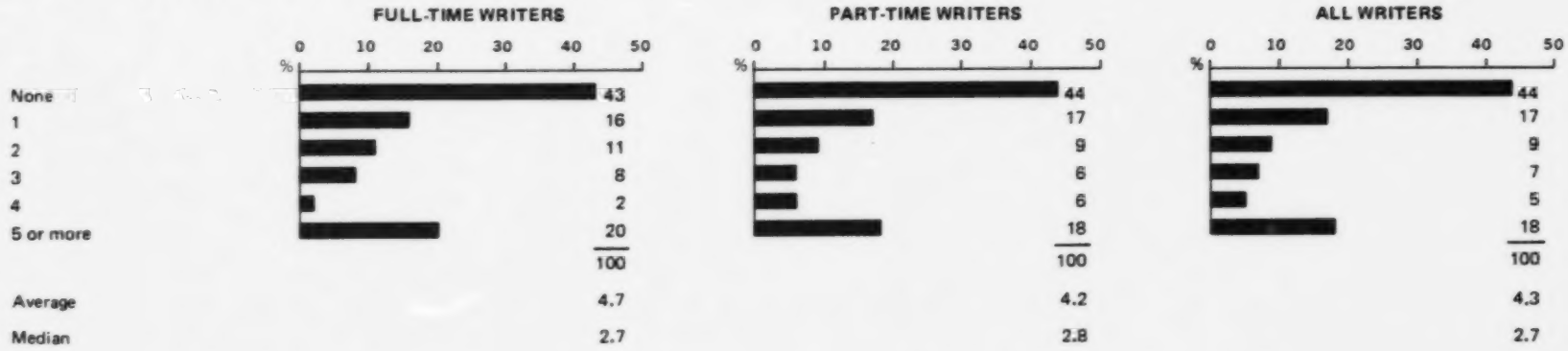
1979

4.1 – NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED IN OR SINCE JANUARY 1974 *



* Includes only writers who had at least one book published.

4.2 – NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED BEFORE JANUARY 1974 *



* Includes only writers who had at least one book published.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

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Based on data from
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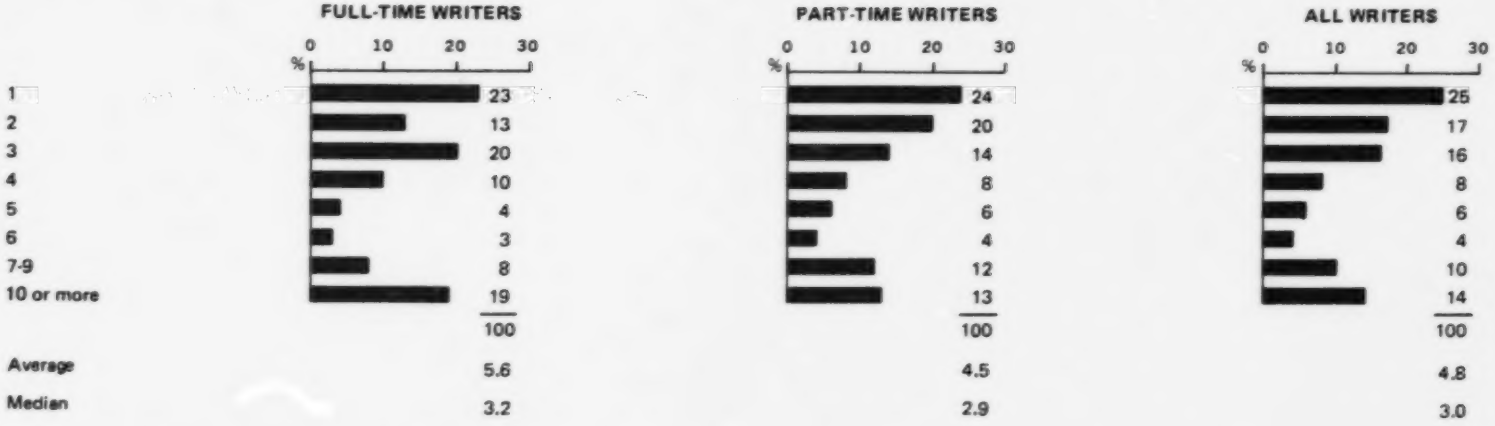
4.3 – NUMBER OF BOOKS PUBLISHED TO DECEMBER 1978 *



* Includes only writers who had at least one book published.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

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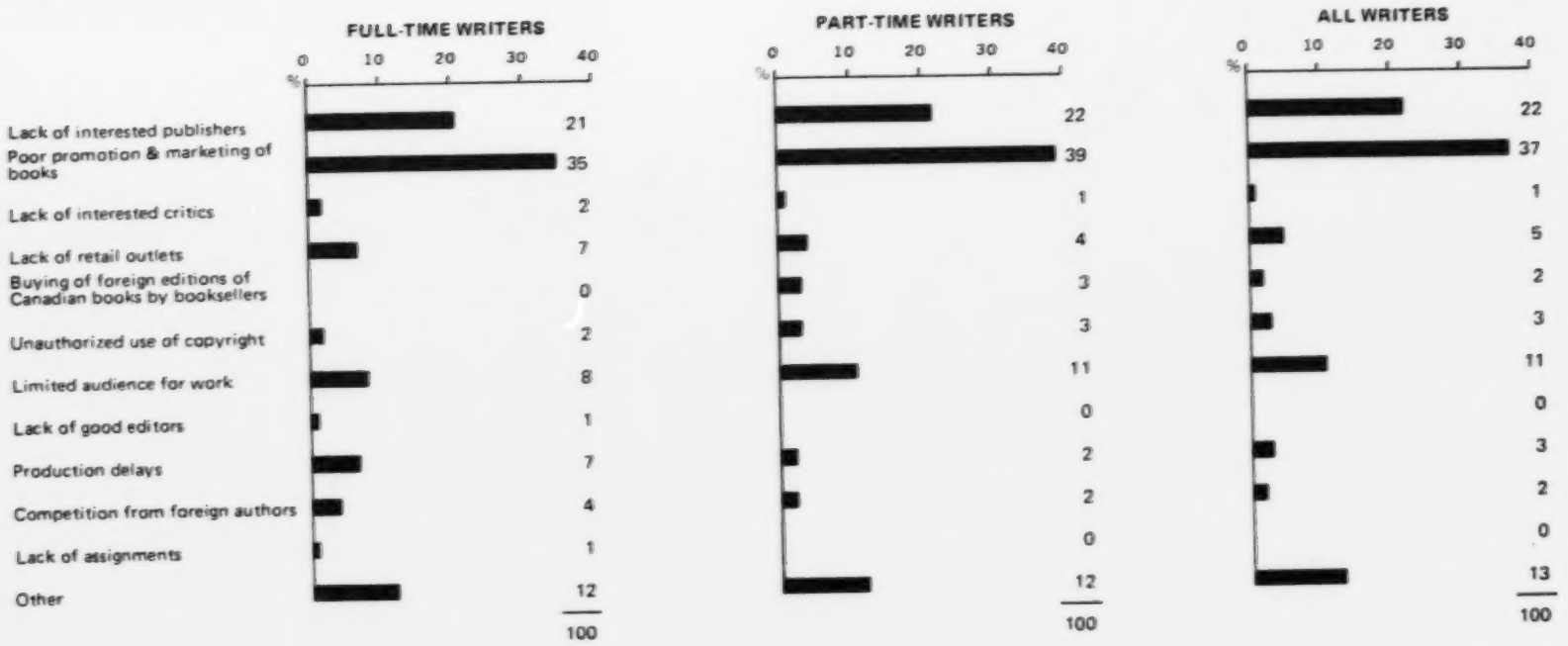
4.4 – LIMITING FACTORS ON SUCCESS



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Poor promotion and marketing of books is felt to be a major factor limiting the success of writers

Writing a book, having it published, and having it read represents a series of stages that differ considerably. The final outcome - the book's success - often depends on factors other than how well the book is written. In nearly all circumstances, however, the book must be read by an editor or publisher, and the public must be made aware of its existence. Reaching these two audiences is critical to the writer's success.

The Survey of Writers asked book writers which of twelve factors listed was the most important in limiting their success. In the view of the largest proportion of writers (37 per cent) "poor promotion and marketing of books" is the most important factor. Many writers believe that their sales suffer because their intended audience is simply not aware of the existence of their books. According to 22 per cent of those surveyed, the most significant problem is a "lack of interested publishers". The "limited audience for work" is the greatest hindrance for 11 per cent of the writers. This need for an expanded reader base is linked to the marketing problems of concern to many, for national and international promotional activities are seen as a means of tapping new domestic or foreign markets.

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Based on data from
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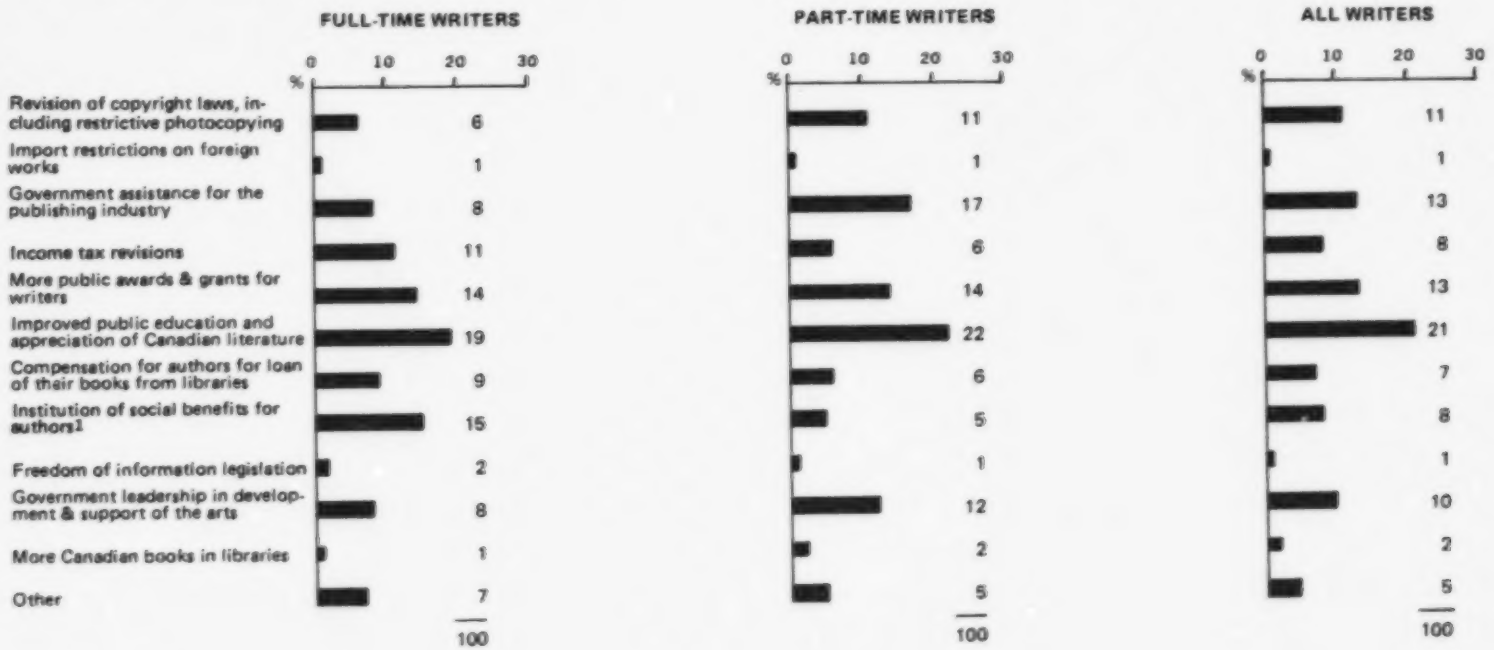
4.5 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING LITERARY FIELD



[1] Such as unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay, etc.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Writers feel that improved public education and appreciation of Canadian literature is necessary

Although it is generally acknowledged that the quality of Canadian literature and the market for good literature have both improved substantially in the last thirty years, the creative writing environment in Canada is still anything but Utopian, and many suggestions for its improvement have been put forward.

The survey questionnaire listed these suggestions, and then asked writers to identify which of the measures was most essential to the immediate development of the literary field in Canada. The question is really a two-dimensional one, for some of the suggestions relate to the writers' personal welfare, others to improving the distribution and sale of books. The two are not always directly linked.

Improving public education and appreciation of Canadian literature is deemed the most important factor by the largest percentage of writers (21 per cent). Many writers believe that the demand for Canadian books would increase if they were given wider exposure in the schools, on the shelves of Canadian bookstores, and through the various book clubs operating in Canada.

Four other possible measures were felt to hold the most promise by at least 10 per cent of freelance writers:*

- More public awards and grants for writers (13 per cent). Many writers have extremely low incomes and need increased financial assistance in order to continue writing.

- Government assistance for the publishing industry (13 per cent).

* Note that these data were collected in October 1979, and that opinions on the most salient issues may have changed with events since that time.

- Revision of copyright laws (11 per cent). Many writers feel that the Canadian Copyright Act needs revision so that authors can receive income from reproduction and use of their work by others.

- Government leadership in development and support of the arts (10 per cent).

Some measures received considerably more support among full-time than among part-time writers. Specifically, full-time writers were more apt to feel that the institution of social benefits for writers and income tax revisions were the most important factors for developing the literary field in Canada. The former such benefits would include unemployment insurance, which is currently unavailable to freelance writers. Many part-time writers hold other paying jobs and therefore may already receive social benefits. This factor may explain their relatively low interest in these measures.

In addition to the factors listed in Chart 4.5, many contemporary writers feel that translation of Canadian works, generally into both official languages, should be fostered in some way.

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Based on data from
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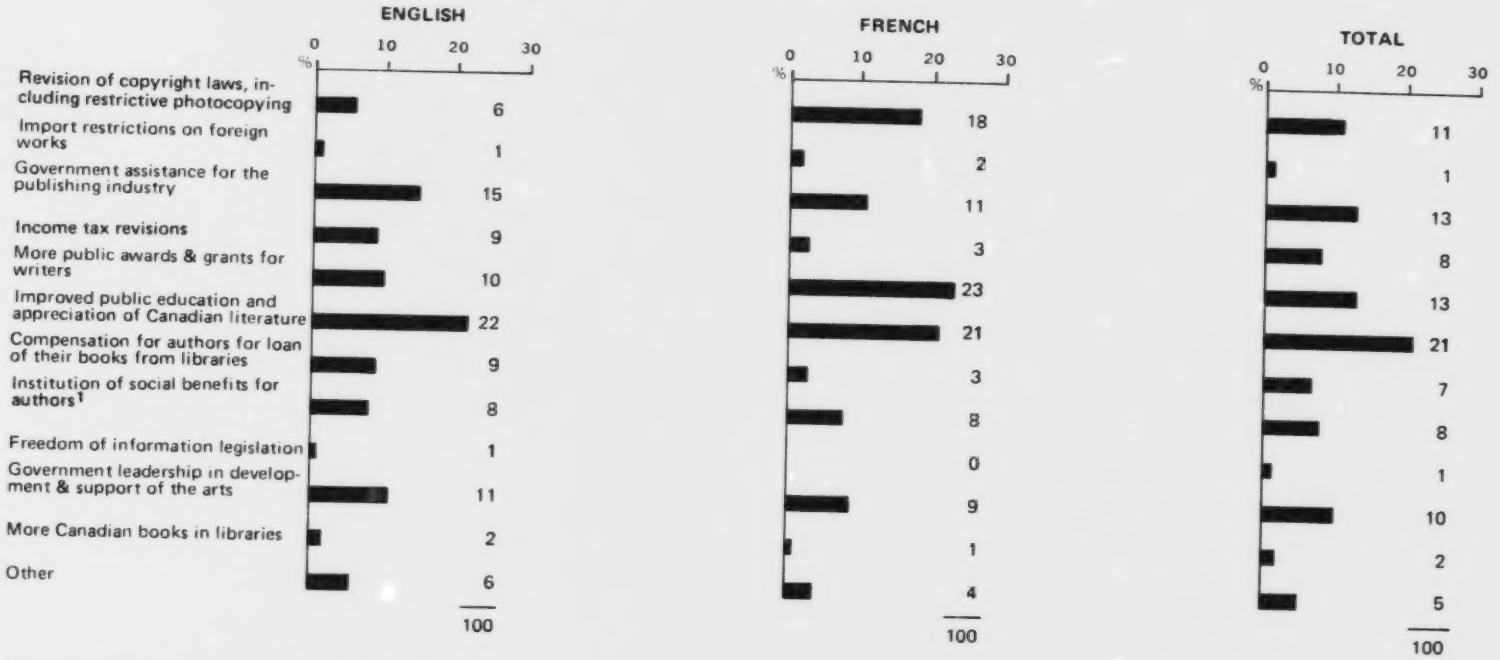
1979

4.6 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING LITERARY FIELD BY WRITING LANGUAGE



[1] Such as unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay, etc.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Increasing awards and grants, and revision of copyright laws receive more support from French writers

How do French-speaking and English-speaking writers differ in their perceptions of the best way to improve the Canadian writing environment? Chart 4.6 demonstrates that French writers are more likely to consider the revision of copyright laws and the provision of public awards and grants to be most important for developing the literary field. The tendency of French authors to favor copyright law revision is three times that of their English counterparts, and the percentage who opted for an increase in awards and grants was slightly more than twice that of English writers. English writers are more supportive of income tax revisions and government assistance to the publishing industry.

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Based on data from
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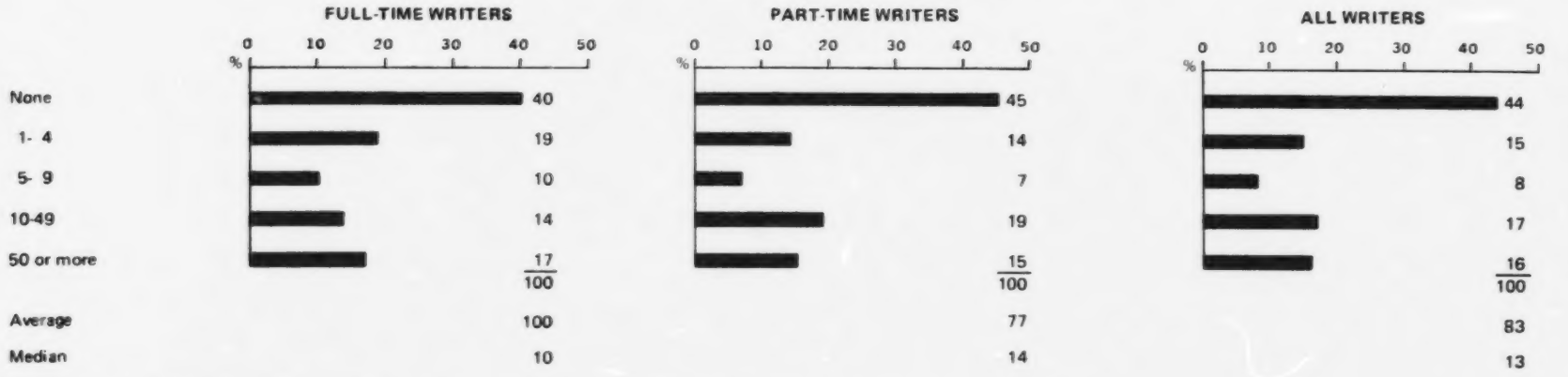
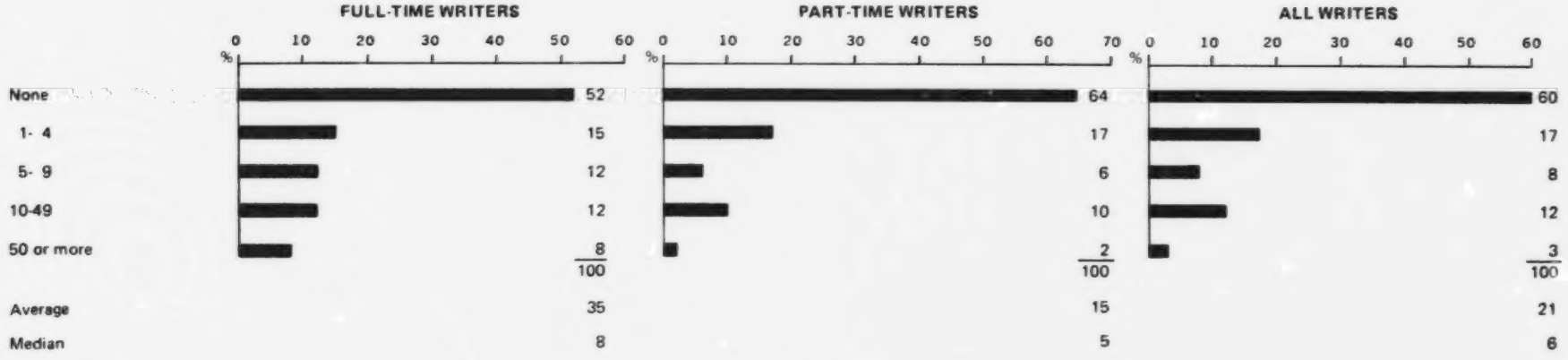
5.1 – NUMBER OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN OR SINCE JANUARY 1974



5.2 – NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN GENERAL INTEREST MAGAZINES IN OR SINCE JANUARY 1974



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5. NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE WRITERS

Fifty per cent of newspaper and magazine writers have had 21 or more articles published

To gauge the productivity of newspaper and magazine writers, the survey asked respondents to indicate the number of "items" they had published from January 1974 to December 1978. Since recalling the number of articles may have been very difficult for writers who had published many items, the resulting data should be interpreted cautiously. The figures pertain to writers who had written an article, review, column or short story that was published at any time prior to the survey.

Chart 5.1 shows that a large proportion of writers in the sub-sample had written for newspapers, in some cases quite prolifically. For full-time writers who had written for newspapers since 1974, the average number of items published was 100, while the median was 10. This indicates that a relatively small percentage of writers in the "50 or more" category of the chart write a significant proportion of the freelance newspaper articles published.

It is evident from Chart 5.2 that fewer writers have had their works published in general interest magazines. Among those who have, a fairly large proportion have had only one to four articles published, while a much smaller percentage than in the case of newspaper writers have had 50 or more articles published.

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Based on data from
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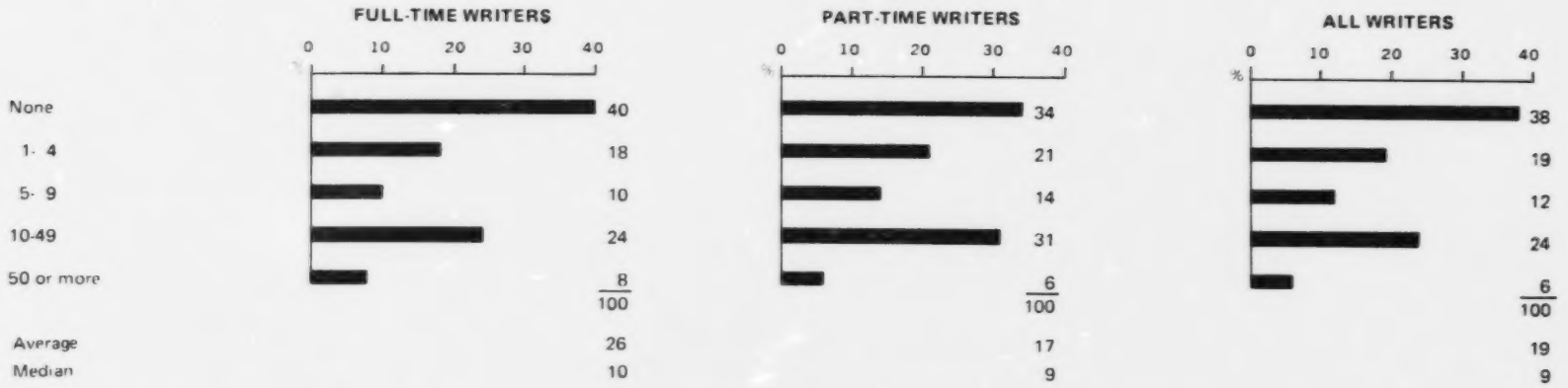
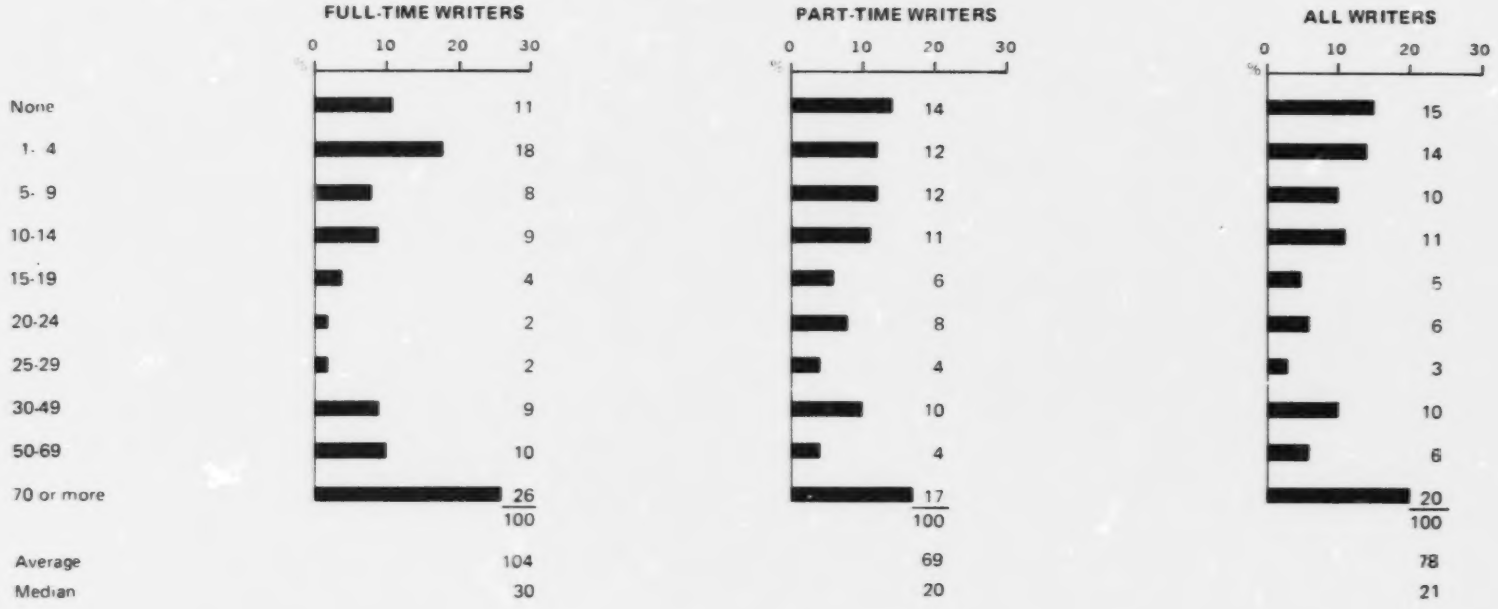
5.3 – NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN SPECIAL INTEREST MAGAZINES IN OR SINCE JANUARY 1974



5.4 – NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES IN OR SINCE JANUARY 1974



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

It appears that more freelance writers have articles published in special interest magazines such as Harrowsmith than in newspapers, or general interest magazines (see Chart 5.3). Sixty-two per cent of the writers in the sub-sample had published an item in a special interest magazine since January 1974, and approximately one writer in four had published between 10 and 49 such articles.

Further analysis shows that most freelancers tend to write articles for more than one type of publication. Only 9 per cent of the writers who have published at least one article in a general-interest magazine have not also written for newspapers or special-interest magazines. The comparable figures for newspaper writers (nothing published in magazines) and special-interest magazine writers (nothing written for newspapers or general-interest magazines) were 21 per cent and 30 per cent. Evidently, writers for special-interest publications have the greatest tendency to specialize, although even 70 per cent of this group diversify their work.

Chart 5.4 reveals that an impressive majority of the respondents who write newspaper or magazine articles have had items published since 1974. Only 15 per cent of the writers in the sub-sample have not had an article published. Forty-five per cent have had 20 or more articles published, and one writer in five has published 70 articles or more.

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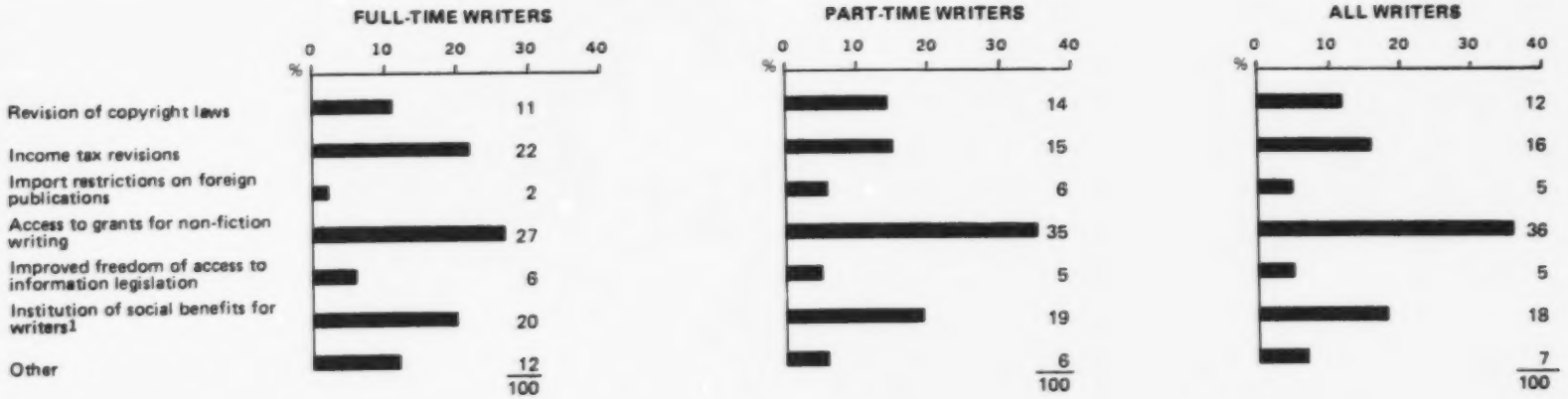
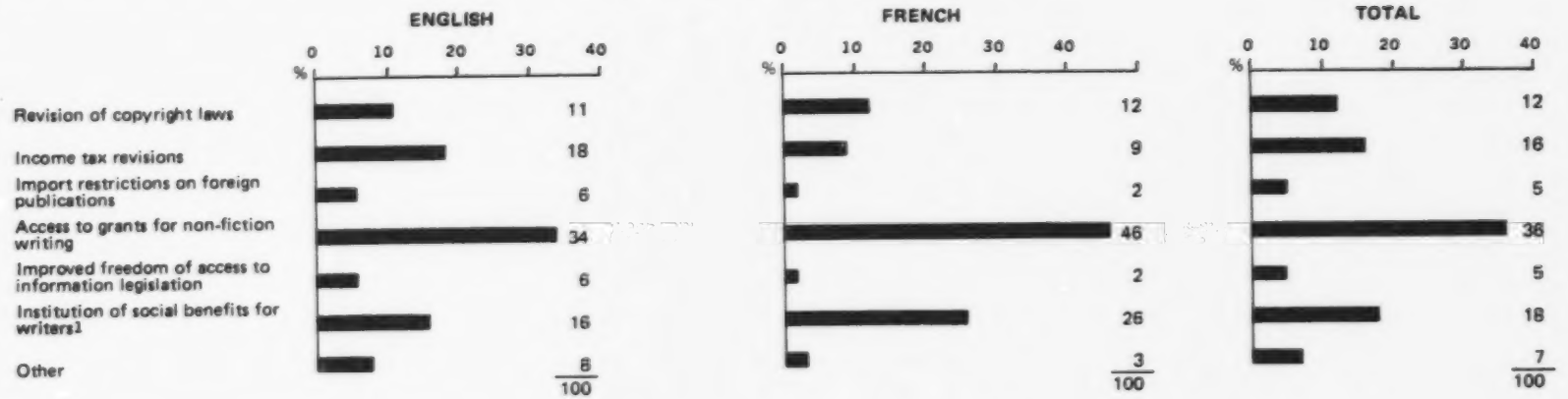
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

5.5 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SITUATION OF FREELANCE WRITERS



[1] Unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay, etc.

5.6 – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SITUATION OF FREELANCE WRITERS BY WRITING LANGUAGE



[1] Unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay, etc.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Newspaper and magazine writers recommend access to grants for non-fiction writing

Writing an article for a newspaper or magazine is quite a different process from producing a book. Freelance articles are more often done on assignment, with the nature of the final article at least vaguely defined by an editor. The writer is paid a fee rather than a percentage of sales, and so the issues of marketing and reaching the intended audience are less relevant to the situation. The factors these writers consider important for improving their working environment are consequently quite different from the concerns of book writers, as documented in Chart 5.5.

Access to grants for non-fiction writing is considered the most important factor by the largest proportion (36 per cent) of respondents. At present, newspaper and magazine writers are ineligible for the Canada Council funds available to book writers. The next most popular recommendation, favored by 18 per cent, is the expansion of social benefits for writers. The existing situation, where writers have no employment security and must make their own provisions for lean months or years, makes it very difficult for some freelance writers to continue their work. Another important consideration, particularly among full-time freelancers, is the need for income tax revisions.

Access to grants and social benefits receive more support from French writers

Comparison of the responses given by English-speaking and French-speaking writers shows interesting differences in the priority given to the various suggestions. French writers tend to choose access to grants and the institution of social benefits more often than English writers. The latter are more likely to consider income tax revisions the most important factor for improving the working conditions of newspaper and magazine writers.

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Based on data from
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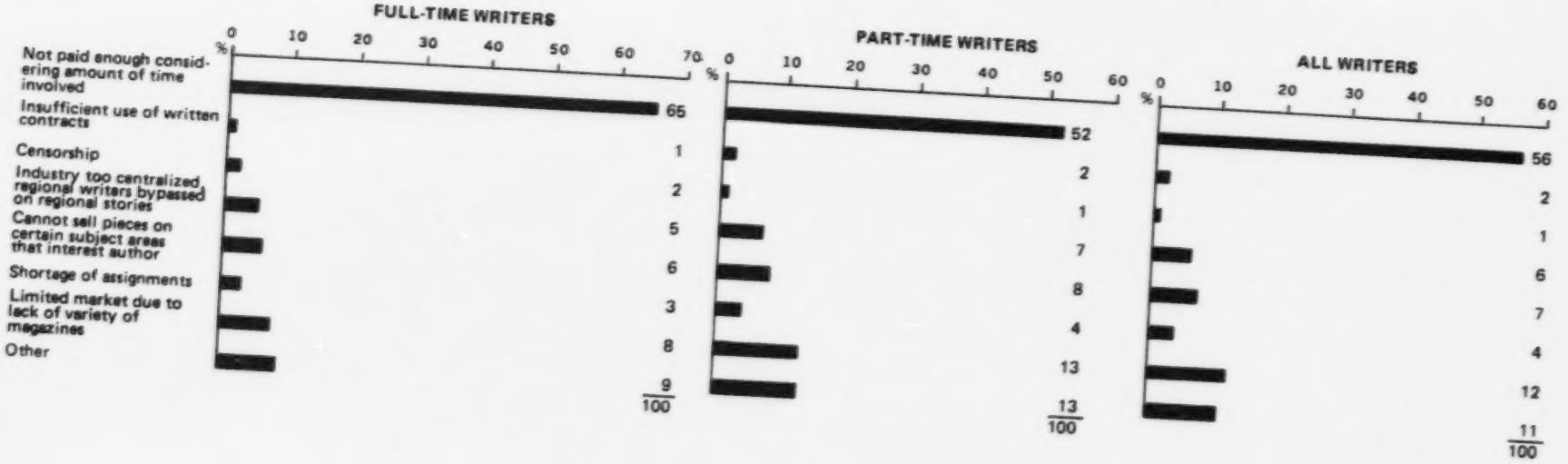
5.7 – LIMITING FACTORS ON SUCCESS



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Poor rates of pay reported as the major factor limiting success of many newspaper and magazine writers

The assignments undertaken by newspaper and magazine writers may range from writing a very short column, poem or review for a small local magazine or newspaper to writing a cover story for a major national magazine. When asked about the factors limiting their success as freelance writers, however, their responses were remarkably consistent. Almost two-thirds of the full-time writers, and 52 per cent of the part-time writers felt that being underpaid, considering the amount of time involved, was the most important factor limiting their success. The Periodical Writers Association of Canada, which represents a large proportion of the freelance periodical writers, reports that many good writers cannot continue to devote their time to this medium, given the low returns on time invested. Their data on fees paid by Canadian magazine publishers show that the rate for feature articles (2500-3500 words) ranges from $25 to $2500; the majority of magazines pay less than $500.

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Based on data from
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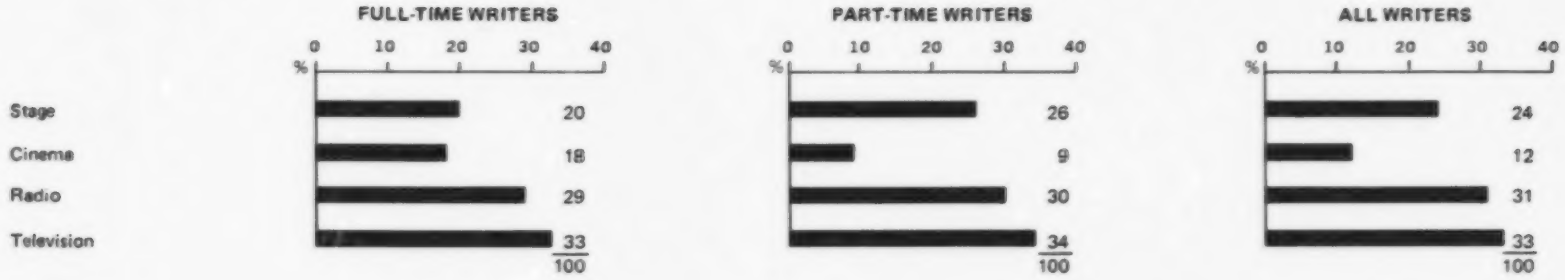
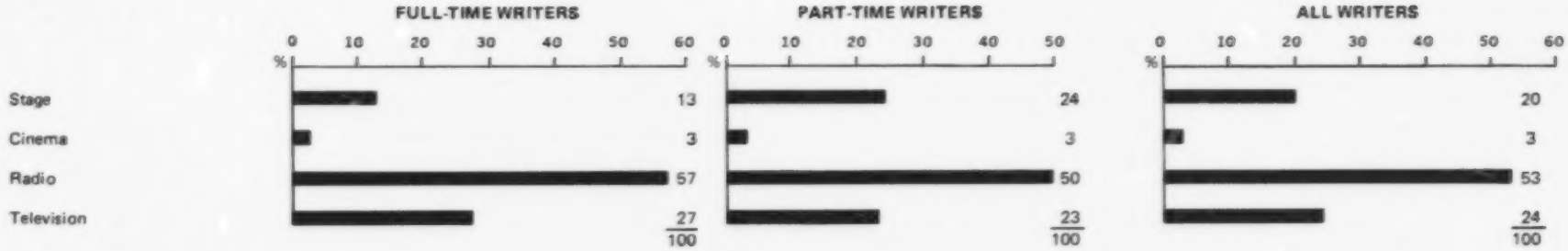
6.1 – WRITING ACTIVITY



6.2 – MEDIUM EMPLOYED FOR FIRST SCRIPT



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

6. SCRIPT WRITERS

More script writers have written for television than for any other medium

Chart 6.1 shows the distribution of writing activities for writers who had written at least one script that was ever produced. These writers were asked to indicate the intended audience for their scripts. Of course, some writers have written for more than one audience and consequently the figures are not indicative of the percentage of writers participating in writing activity. Approximately one-third of writing participation was for television, a slightly smaller percentage for radio, and about one-fourth was for the stage. Cinema is the medium in which the lowest participation is found and part-time freelancers are the least likely to have had a film script produced.

The majority of script writers started in radio

Where did most script writers get their start? Chart 6.2 shows that the majority (53 per cent of all script writers and 57 per cent of the full-time script writers) began their careers by writing for radio, a far more popular starting point than any other medium. Script writers are least likely to write their first script for the cinema, where it seems that opportunity only knocks at the door of the experienced. Part-time writers tend to launch their script-writing careers with a stage play far more frequently than do their full-time contemporaries, who are more inclined to begin by writing for television.

Further analysis of the career beginnings of script writers demonstrates that 76 per cent completed their first script after 1960, and 51 per cent began writing in the 1970s. The high percentage of respondents who completed their first script in more recent years is indicative of the relatively young age distribution of writers, and the enriched opportunities for Canadian script writers in the 1970s.

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Based on data from
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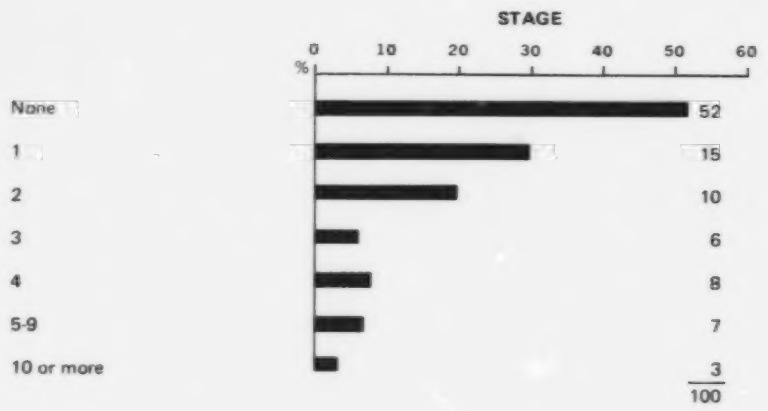
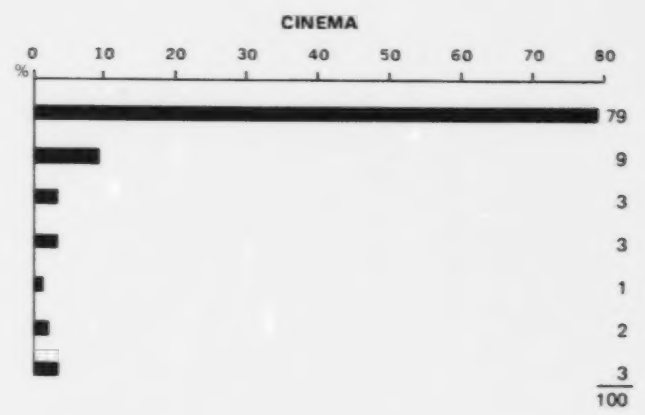
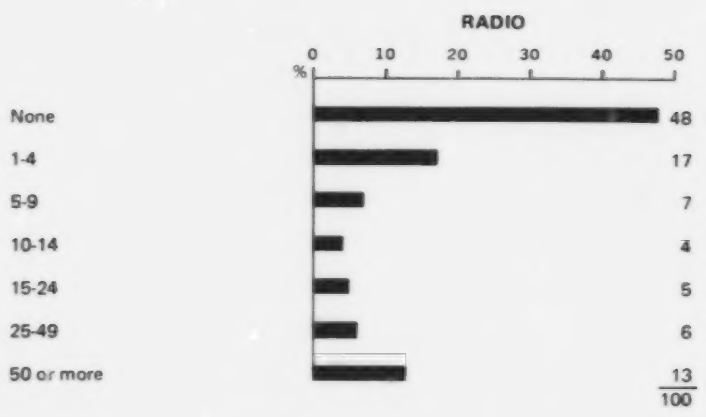
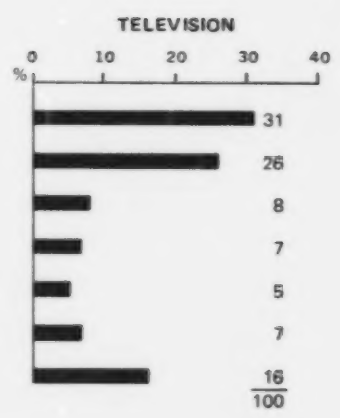
1979

6.3 – NUMBER OF SCRIPTS WRITTEN FOR STAGE, CINEMA, RADIO AND TELEVISION









Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Some television and radio writers have written fifty or more scripts

The number of scripts that freelancers had produced by the four media shown in Chart 6.3 reflects the opportunities available in each medium; many more works are written and produced for radio and television than for the stage or the cinema. The vast majority (79 per cent) of script writers surveyed had not written a movie script that was produced for the cinema, and a fair proportion of those who had done so wrote only one. Almost half of the writers had successfully written for the stage; and more than a third had written more than one play. A number of prolific writers had written for television: 16 per cent of the writers had written at least fifty scripts. Slightly more than half of the script writers had written for radio, and again, some had 50 or more to their credit.

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Based on data from
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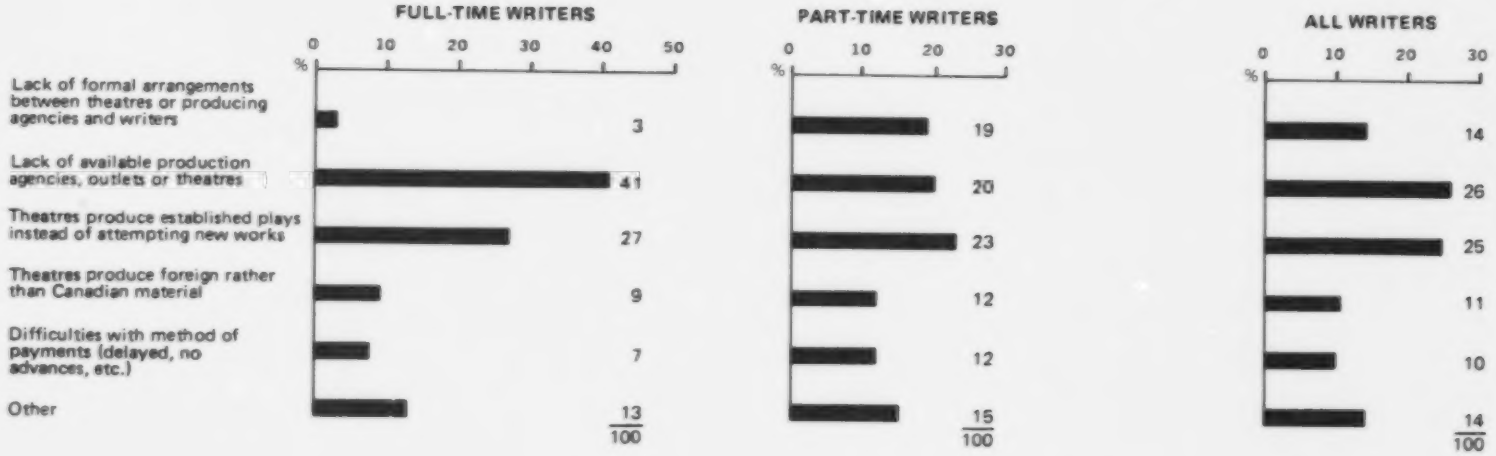
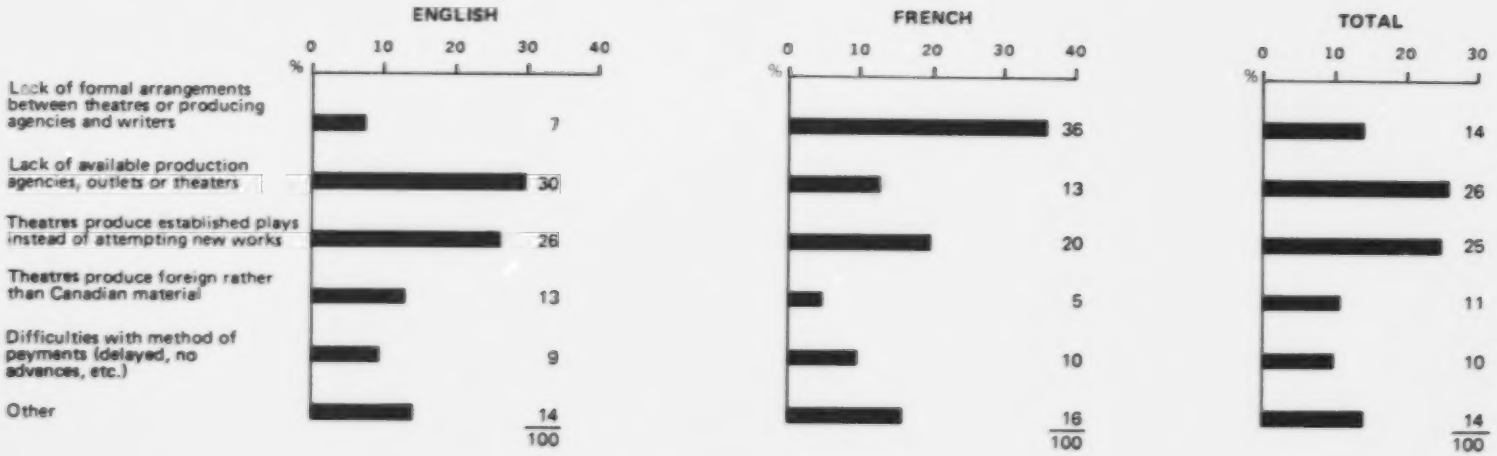
6.4 – LIMITING FACTORS ON SUCCESS



6.5 – LIMITING FACTORS ON SUCCESS BY WRITING LANGUAGE



Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Paucity of production possibiiities most important concern of script writers

Script writers surveyed were also asked to identify the most important factor limiting their success. The two factors chosen most often pertained both to the dearth of production possibilities - the lack of available production agencies, outlets or theatres - and the fact that theatres produce established plays rather than attempting new works. Striking differences can be observed between the responses of full-time and part-time writers; the former tend to concentrate on the two factors mentioned above, while 19 per cent of the latter group felt that the lack of formal arrangements between theatres or producing agencies and writers was the most important factor limiting success.

Lack of formal arrangements more important for French writers

French-speaking and English-speaking script writers have quite divergent views of the problems they face, the survey found. Of the French writers, 36 per cent identified the lack of formal arrangements between theatres or producing agencies and writers as their greatest concern, while only 7 per cent of the English writers shared this opinion. In contrast, fewer French than English writers believe that a lack of available production outlets and the tendency of theatres to produce established plays are the most significant problems.

It is interesting to note that the problem of competition from foreign material is the most worrisome problem for 13 per cent of the English writers, but is the major concern of only 5 per cent of their French counterparts. This disparity of opinion is probably due to concern over the competition from American scriptwriters faced by the English-speaking respondents.

7. INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT

Incomes of writers

One of the most important issues facing writers today, and certainly the most important for many, is their financial status. Many writers find it extremely difficult to maintain a reasonable standard of living and at the same time pursue their writing with the necessary vigor to produce creative works that maintain the level of quality of which they are capable.

Margaret Atwood described the difficulties writers face when she noted, in a paper delivered at the 1981 conference on Book Publishing and Public Policy, that many writers must take part-time jobs or work as full-time employees of schools, universities, governments or publishers in order to make ends meet. Because of this, she said, the Canadian literary culture is much poorer.

Public perceptions of the financial status of writers may be vastly at odds with the perception of the writing community. Exposed to Canadian writers only through the media, where a few celebrities catch a disproportionate share of the spotlight, the public is given an unrealistic impression, and so the problems experienced by many freelancers go unrecognized.

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the financial situation of Canadian writers by analyzing data on their incomes and employment histories. What levels of writing income do writers reach? Do they really take on part-time jobs, and if so, what types of jobs? Including income from all sources, what are the total earnings of writers and how do they compare with those of most Canadians? How do the incomes of male and female writers compare?

The income data presented in this chapter should be interpreted cautiously for several reasons. First, it should be noted that the survey took place in October 1979, and the questions referred to income for the calendar year of 1978. Given the time lag involved, respondents may have had difficulty recalling exact earnings from some sources, and the quality of response may be affected accordingly.

Second, the income question pertains to 1978 only; a year in which earnings may have been affected by many factors, such as the stage of a writer's work. Some may have been in the midst of a project, while others were receiving

returns from publication. Freelance writing incomes tend to fluctuate to a much greater degree than those of wage-earners; consequently, the clustering of incomes at low and high levels would not be so distinct if the data were collected over several years.

Third, the response rate to income questions in surveys is traditionally quite poor. Respondents may find the questions too personal, or lack the motivation to seek out income tax returns or other sources for the necessary information.

Writing incomes of many writers are extremely low

The writing income figures include revenues from all the types of writing in which survey respondents were involved: books, periodicals, radio, television, stage and film. Chart 7.1 shows that, collectively, freelancers' earnings were meager in 1978. The average income of full-time writers was $13,840, but their median income was $7,000. This means that half of Canadian full-time writers (working 30 or more hours per week) made less than $7,000 from their writing in 1978. The average and median writing incomes of part-time freelancers were both very modest, at $3,640 and $1,200 respectively.

Many writers are clustered at income levels well below $10,000. Among full-time writers, 42 per cent earned less than $5,000 from their craft in 1978, and 20 per cent made between $5,000 and $9,999. The comparable figures for part-time writers were 80 per cent and 13 per cent; in other words, 93 per cent of the part-time writers earned less than $10,000. It is impossible to determine exactly how much time part-time writers spent at their craft in 1978, as we know only that they spent less than 30 hours per week on freelancing, but it is clear that their incomes from this source were modest.

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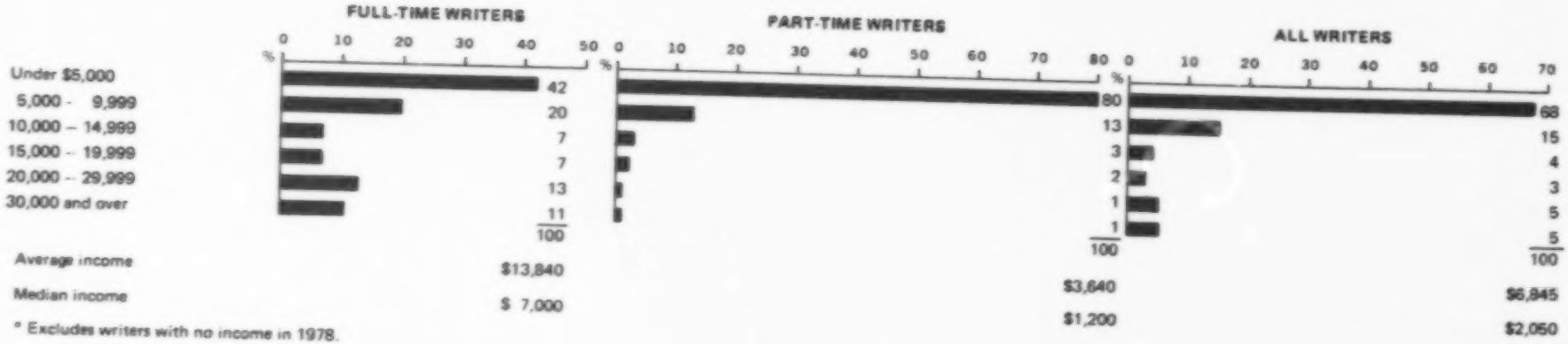
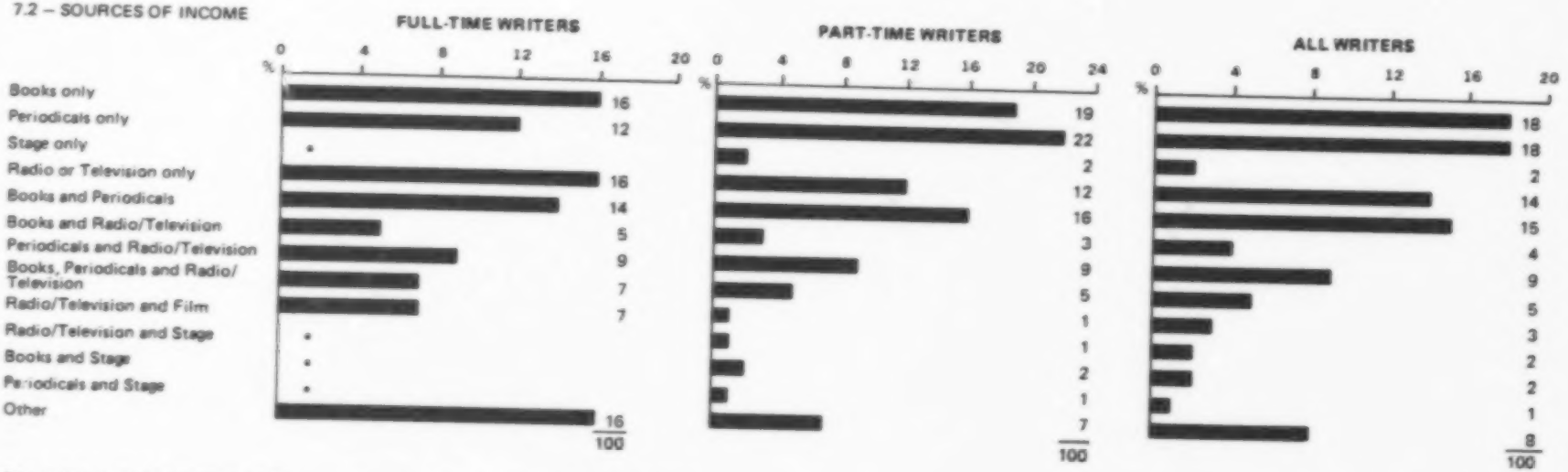
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

7.1 – WRITING INCOME *



* Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

7.2 – SOURCES OF INCOME



* Included in "Other" category. These sources represent a very small proportion of writers.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Writers earn incomes from many writing activities

Many freelancers write for several media in order to increase their sources of income; others may choose to undertake a variety of assignments to increase public awareness of their work or to broaden their experience. The degree to which this diversification occurs can be studied by examining the various income sources for 1978.

Chart 7.2 shows that it is not at all unusual for writers to receive income from more than one source, an occurrence reported by roughly half of the full-time writers and a slightly smaller proportion of the part-time writers. Among the categories listed, the most prevalent sources of income are periodicals, books, or a combination of these two. Periodicals were the sole source of income for 18 per cent of those surveyed and books for a similar percentage, while 15 per cent of the respondents obtained their earnings from both sources. Writing for the electronic media provided the income of 14 per cent of Canadian freelancers, but only 2 per cent wrote solely for the stage. The remaining writers earned income from a variety of activities.

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Based on data from
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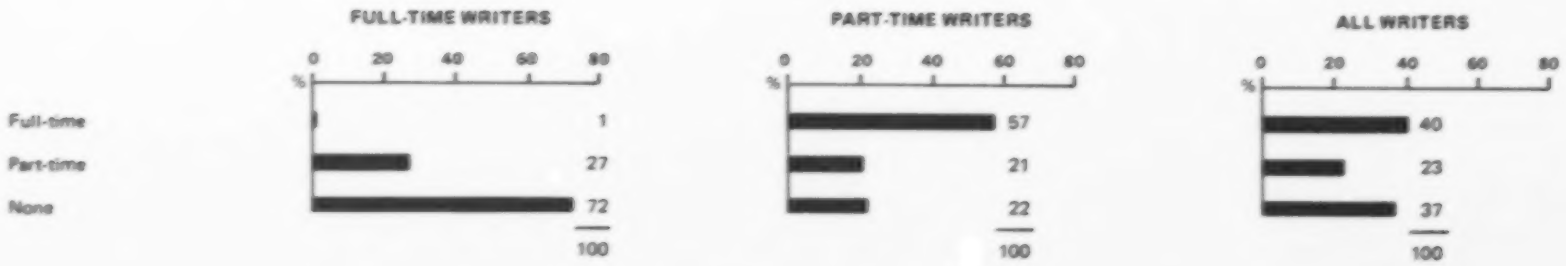
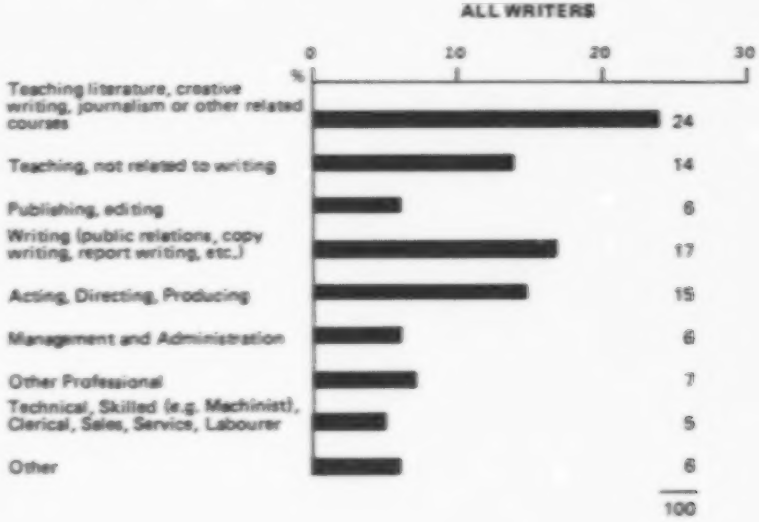
7.3 – OTHER JOB ACTIVITIES



7.4 – TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT



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Most freelance writers have other jobs

As mentioned earlier in this report, many writers contend that the impossibility of achieving a reasonable standard of living based on their writing income forces them to take on other jobs that will supplement their earnings. An indication of the extent to which this occurs can be gleaned from Chart 7.3, which shows the percentage of writers who earned money from other types of employment in 1978.

It appears that income supplementation is a real need: 63 per cent of the writers surveyed held other jobs on either a full-time or part-time basis, and 40 per cent were engaged full-time in an activity other than freelance writing. Focussing on the full-time writers, 27 per cent had other part-time employment in 1978; a few reported having other full-time jobs, and 72 per cent were engaged in freelance writing only. Only 22 per cent of the part-time freelancers had no supplementary income source, and 57 per cent were employed on a full-time basis.

It is interesting to study the tendency of different types of writers to obtain other employment, for this provides insights into the economic situation of the various groups. This analysis shows that freelancers who concentrate on poetry are most apt to have another paying job. In 1978, only 13 per cent of the freelance poets in Canada had no other employment, and more than half of the full-time poets had other sources of income. Although freelancers specializing in other forms of writing appear able to devote more time to their craft, 55 per cent of the non-fiction writers, 56 per cent of those who write fiction and 60 per cent of the dramatists held other jobs according the survey.

Many writers work in the teaching profession

What other types of work do freelance writers undertake? Chart 7.4 shows that 38 per cent are teachers, and about one writer in four teaches a discipline related to writing, such as creative writing or journalism. Many of the others in this sub-group work as salaried writers (17 per cent) or as actors, directors or producers (15 per cent).

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Based on data from
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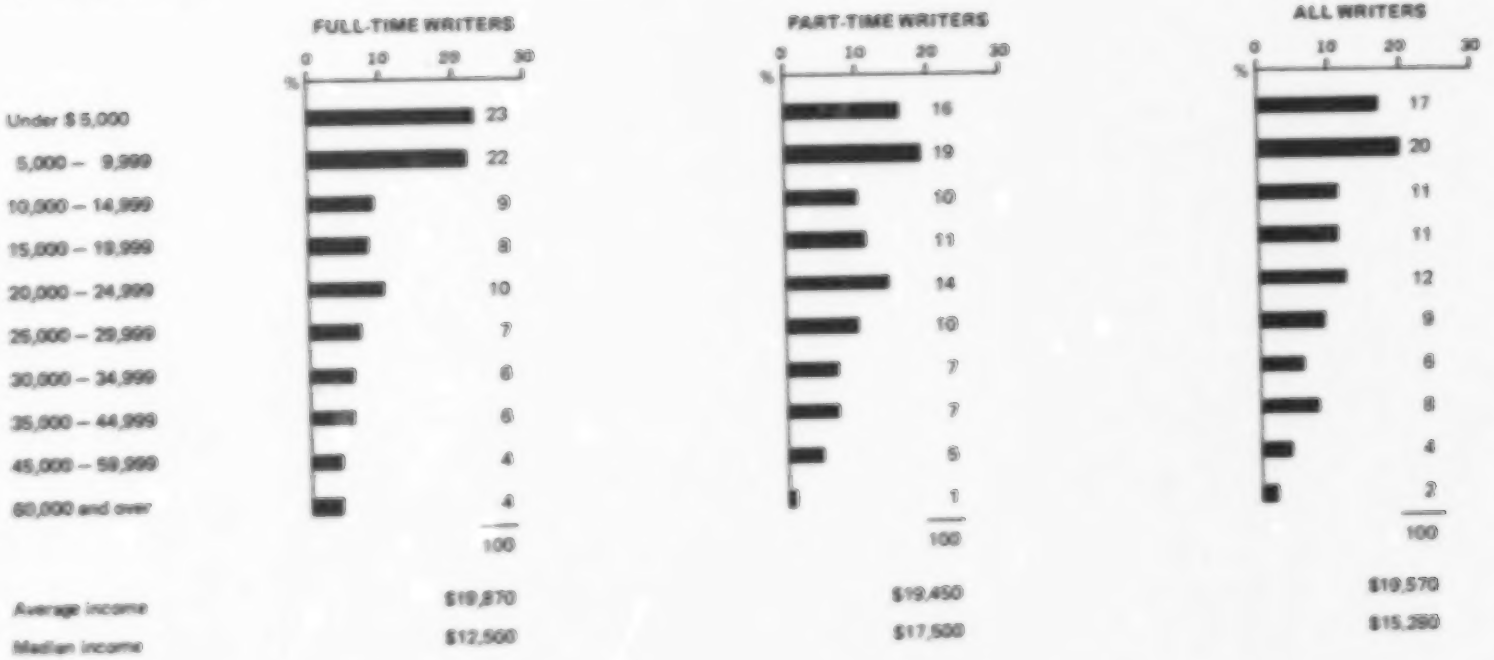
1979

7.5 – TOTAL INCOME*



* Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Median income of full-time writers is $12,500

Chart 7.5 shows the total income of freelance writers in 1978. It is apparent that even considering all sources of income, the revenues of many freelancers, and particularly of full-time writers, are still low. Among full-time writers, the median income from all sources was just $12,500 in 1978. While it is true that 8 per cent of the full-time writers earned $45,000 or more that year, a much higher percentage were in low income categories: 23 per cent made less than $5,000 and another 22 per cent had incomes of between $5,000 and $9,999.

Since part-time writers obtain most of their revenue from their alternate employment, their total incomes are considerably higher than those of full-time freelancers. The average 1978 income of part-time writers was $19,450, the median, $17,500.

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Based on data from
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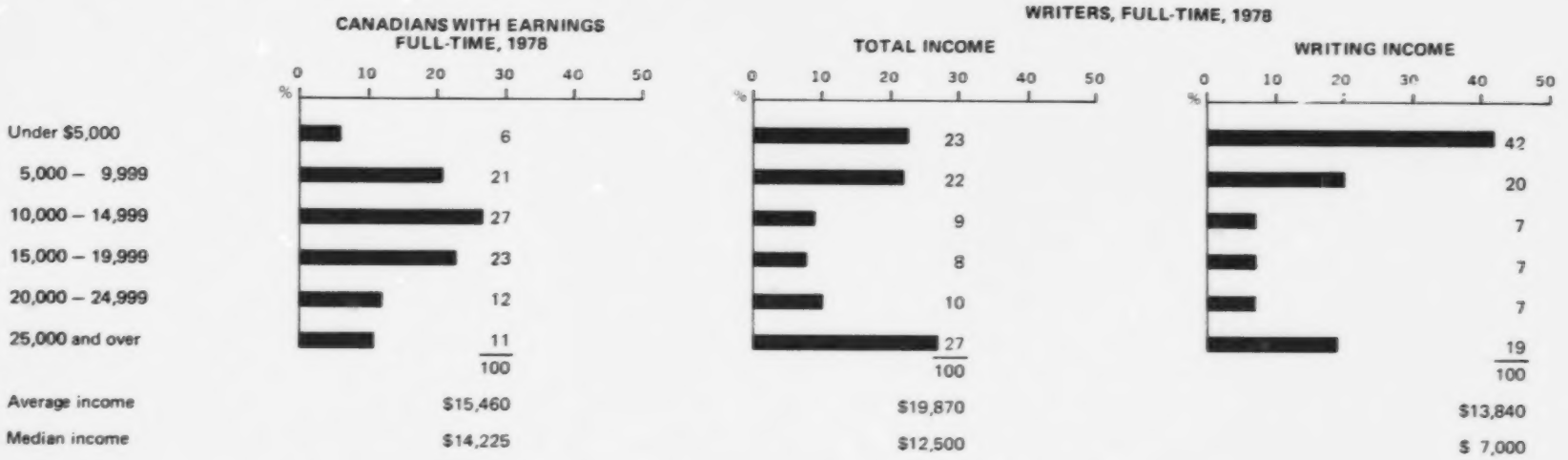
1979

7.6 – COMPARISON OF INCOMES*



* Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Incomes of writers are lower than those of average Canadians

To place data on writers' incomes into perspective, it is worthwhile to compare their incomes to those of Canadian wage-earners. This can be done by using data from the 1979 Survey of Consumer Finances in which Statistics Canada tabulates the incomes of wage earners, regardless of their occupation or education. Although the survey data are not strictly comparable to the figures collected for Canadian writers*, the two can be used to derive a general impression of how the income levels of freelance writers compare with those of the general population. Since the Survey of Consumer Finances employed a very different definition of "part-time worker" from the Survey of Writers, any comparison of these sub-groups would be imprecise; consequently, only full-time writers will be compared.

These comparisons indicate sizable discrepancies between the incomes of full-time writers and those of full-time wage earners in Canada. Although some writers are much better paid than the average Canadian, many more are in low-income categories, and the median writing income of writers is far less than that of wage-earning Canadians. If we consider that almost two-thirds of the writers hold a university degree, and that there is a recognized relationship in Canada between education and income, the disparities become even more striking. Furthermore, the expenses incurred by writers in bringing their work to completion are generally greater than the work-related expenses of the average breadwinner. The financial rewards of writing full-time in 1978 were generally less rewarding than were those gained by Canadians employed in other fields of endeavor.

* The Consumer Finance data include employment income earnings only, and do not reflect income from other sources (e.g. stocks, bonds, transfer payments). Conversely, the data on total income from the Survey of Writers include income from all sources. In addition, the definition of full-time work used by the Consumer Finance Survey differs from that used for the Survey of Writers. The Consumer Finance Survey defined a full-time worker as one who worked 50-52 weeks during 1978, mostly on a full-time basis. The Survey of Writers asked respondents to describe the time spent in 1978 as a full-time or part-time writer based on the number of hours worked per week, not the number of weeks worked.

Incomes vary greatly according to writing medium

It has been shown in the previous section that major differences exist in the distribution of incomes among writers, but how do incomes compare for writers working in different specialities? This question is difficult to examine, since so many freelancers write for more than one medium. Someone who is primarily a book writer may not have been writing a book at the time under scrutiny (1978).

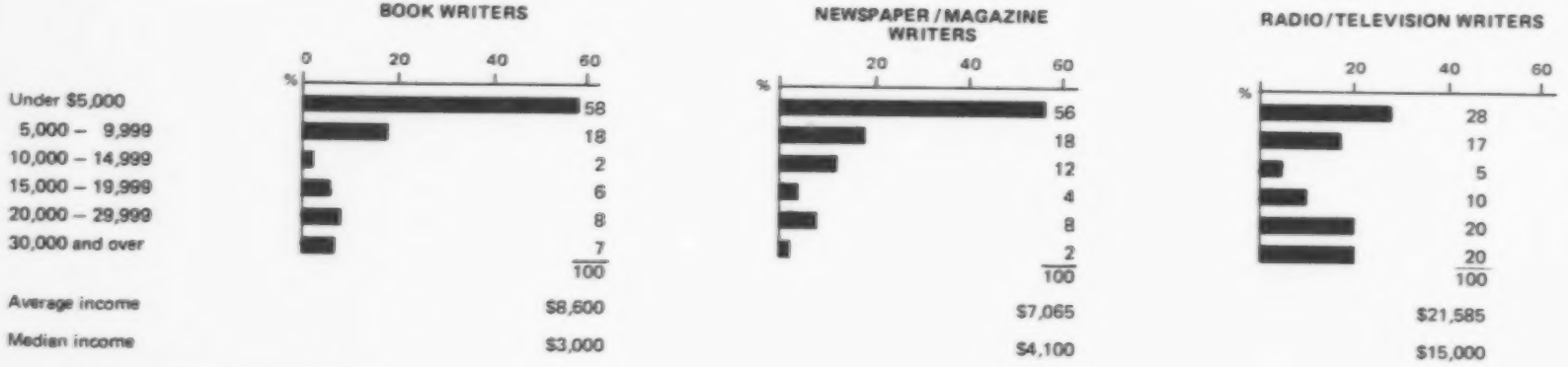
If we define a book writer as anyone who has ever written a book, and then compile statistical tables on their writing incomes in 1978, we may be left with a very distorted picture since many may have been involved in book writing in only a peripheral way, during the 1978 income period. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a definition which suggests an area of concentration.

Ideally, we would be able to select writers on the basis of the amount of time devoted to each medium. Using such an approach, a writer who devoted more than 50 per cent of his time to book writing, might be considered a book writer. Unfortunately, information on time spent writing for the various media in 1978 is not available from the survey. However, an indication of a writer's commitment to a specific medium can be obtained from the information supplied on income from various sources. Thus, in the following discussion a writer is categorized according to the specialty from which the largest portion of his or her income was received in 1978.

RESEARCH & STATISTICS DIRECTORATE
ARTS AND CULTURE BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

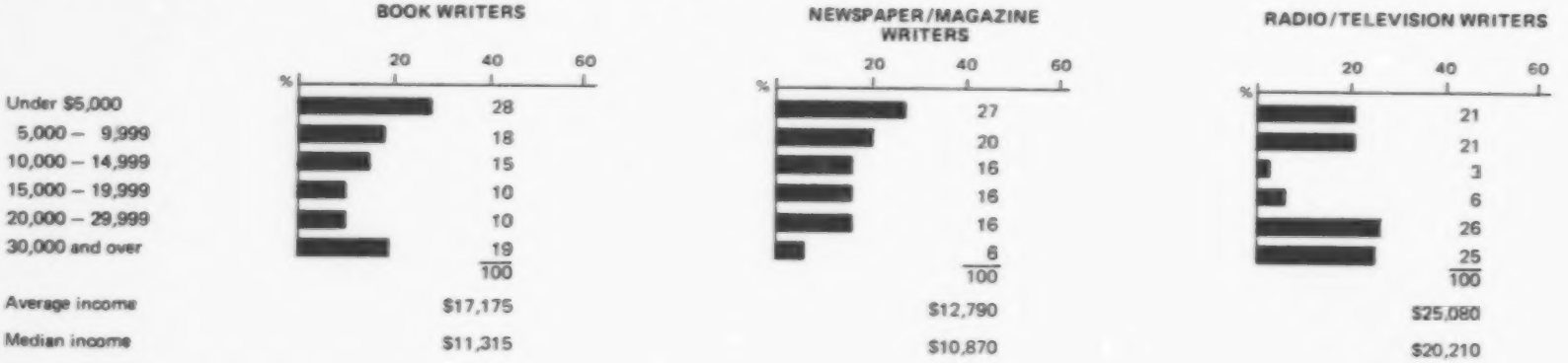
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

7.7 – WRITING INCOME BY MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WRITERS *



* Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

7.8 – TOTAL INCOME BY MAJOR SOURCE OF INCOME FOR FULL-TIME WRITERS *



* Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Chart 7.7 shows the distribution of writing income for book writers, newspaper and magazine writers, and radio/television writers as defined above. The following general conclusions can be drawn:

- A large proportion of full-time writers in each category had incomes from writing of less than $10,000 in 1978. The lowest are found among book writers and newspaper/magazine writers. Fully 58 per cent of full-time book writers earned less than $5,000, a further 18 per cent earned between $5,000 and $9,999, and their median income was $3,000. Similar percentages of the newspaper or magazine writers reported earnings of under $5,000, and between $5,000 and $9,999; their median income was $4,100.

- Although 45 per cent of the radio and television writers earn less than $10,000, a sizable proportion reported that they earned $20,000 to $29,999 or more than $30,000 in 1978. The median income of these writers is $15,000.

- Among part-time writers, the vast majority of the periodical and book writers had writing incomes of less than $5,000 in 1978; two-thirds of the radio and television writers had incomes in this range.

We have seen that writing incomes, particularly where book and periodical writers are concerned, are, in general, quite low. But how about their aggregate income including income from other sources? The financial picture for the combined categories then appears a little brighter. Chart 7.8 shows that, when total income is considered, considerably fewer writers reported incomes of less than $5,000 although their numbers are still substantial.

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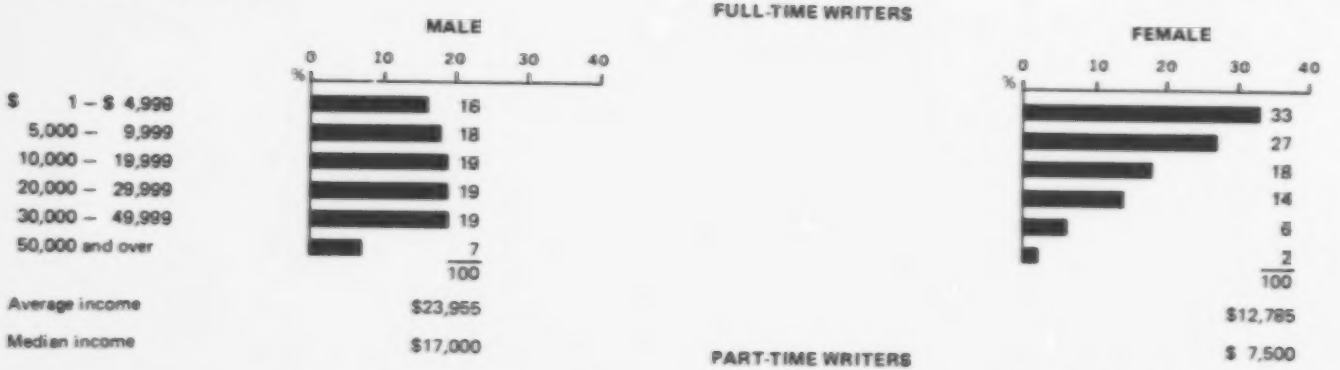
ARTS & CULTURE BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

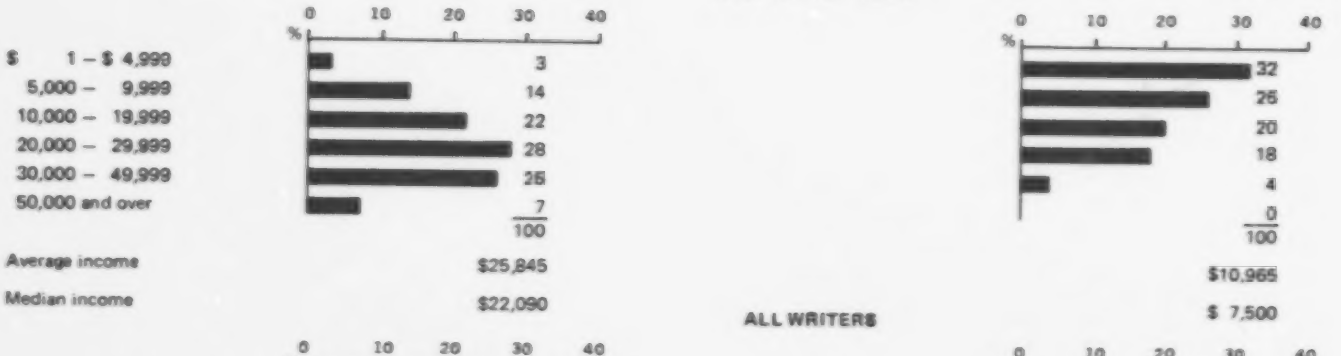
7.9 – TOTAL INCOME BY SEX*

FULL-TIME WRITERS



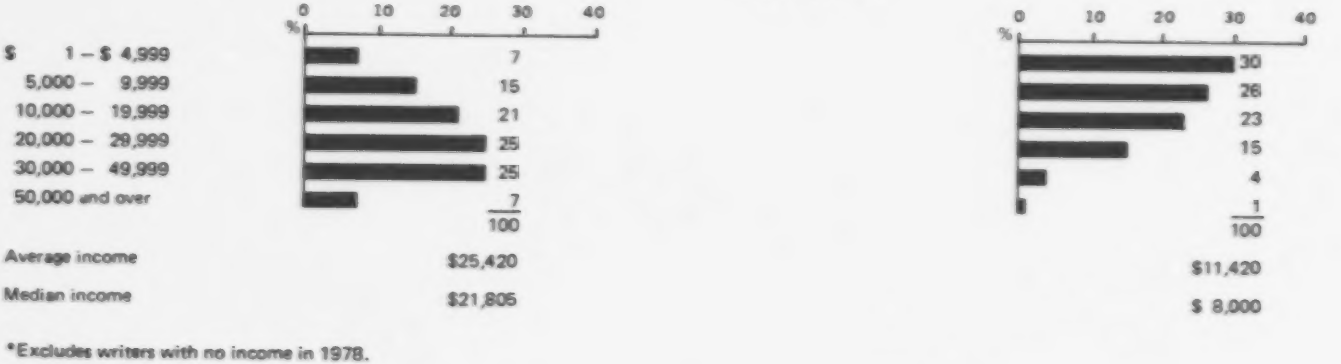
	MALE	FEMALE
Average income	$23,955	$12,785
Median income	$17,000	$ 7,500

PART-TIME WRITERS



	MALE	FEMALE
Average income	$25,845	$10,965
Median income	$22,090	$ 7,500

ALL WRITERS



	MALE	FEMALE
Average income	$25,420	$11,420
Median income	$21,805	$ 8,000

*Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Incomes of men much higher than women

Earlier in this report, it was noted that male freelance writers outnumber their female counterparts by a considerable margin; 58 per cent of all writers, and almost two-thirds of the full-time writers were men. But how do the incomes of the two compare? Chart 7.9 shows that since a greater proportion of the women made less than $10,000, the median incomes of both full-time and part-time male writers were much higher.

Sixty per cent of the full-time female writers earned less than $10,000. The median income of their male counterparts was more than twice as high ($17,000 versus $7,500). As part-time male writers tend to have even higher total incomes than full-time male freelancers, the women in this group are once again left far behind: their median income is one-third that of the men.

RESEARCH & STATISTICS DIRECTORATE
ARTS AND CULTURE BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS

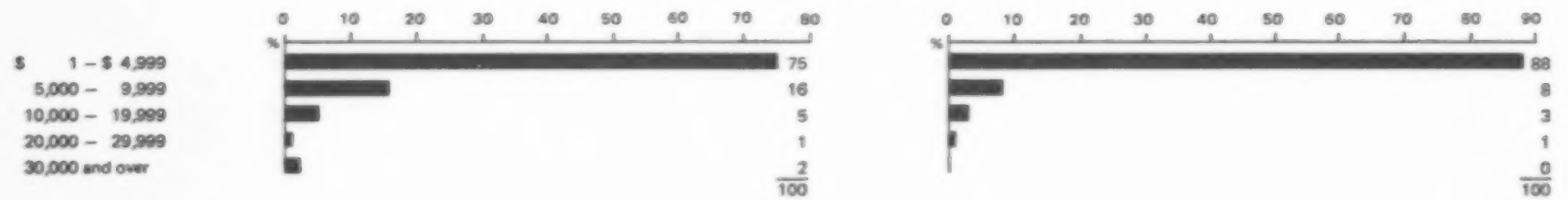
Based on data from
Survey of Writers, Statistics Canada
1979

7.10 – WRITING INCOME BY SEX*

FULL-TIME WRITERS

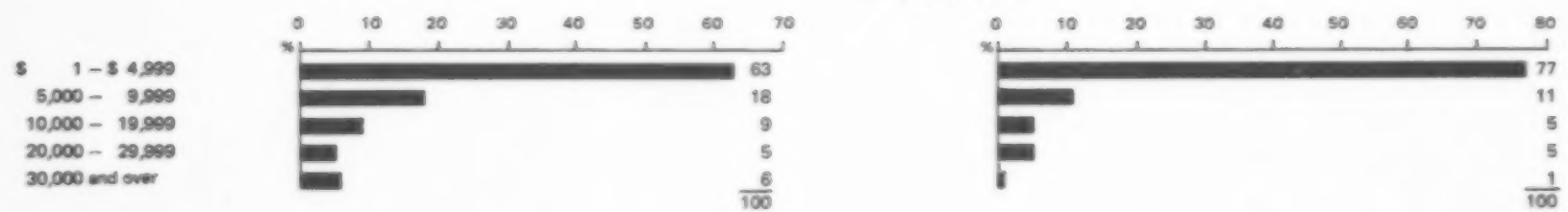
	MALES	FEMALES
Average income	$17,245	$8,605
Median income	$ 9,400	$3,550

PART-TIME WRITERS



Average income	$3,135	$2,030
Median income	$2,000	$ 800

ALL WRITERS



Average income	$8,465	$4,185
Median income	$3,000	$1,000

*Excludes writers with no income in 1978.

Note: The "All Writers" category includes 145 writers who did not indicate whether they were full-time or part-time writers, as well as 148 writers who were not active in 1978. Thus, percentages shown for all writers do not necessarily fall between those shown for full-time and part-time writers. In addition, the figures may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Writing incomes of men also higher

The disparities in the total incomes of the men and women surveyed may result from differences in their earnings from sources other than writing. Other studies have shown considerable imbalances in the salaries paid to men and women in occupations that freelance writers tend to choose. To establish whether this explanation is tenable, the writing incomes of the male and female respondents can be examined independently (see Chart 7.10).

When writing income is isolated in this manner, the distribution of income for part-time writers becomes more uniform, though there are still more women in the lowest income category, and the median income of men is higher. However, in the case of full-time writers, the marked differences in income distribution persist; a much higher percentage of the women are clustered at the lower end of the spectrum (57 per cent made less than $5,000) and a smaller proportion of women are found at the higher income levels (only 17 per cent earned $20,000 or more). The median income of the full-time male writers is approximately 2.6 times that of the women.

Attempting to isolate the reasons for income differences among full-time male and female writers is much more difficult than in many other occupational groups. Among factory workers or clerical workers, for example, the time worked over the course of a year, and the end products involved are much more homogeneous than among writers, and provide a more solid foundation for income comparisons. To provide a definitive explanation for the disparities apparent in Chart 7.9, more information would be required on the type and quantity of work done during the income-earning period, and, ideally, on the quality of the work.

Nevertheless, several hypotheses can be put forward:

- It is possible that women are paid less than men, for work similar in quality and quantity because of discrimination on the basis of sex.

- Alternatively, there may be other factors related to the economic circumstances under which some women are working. It was suggested during

consultations with writing associations and unions that many women writers are married, and not dependent solely on their writing incomes to earn a living. This would permit them to write less commercially acceptable material, to accept lower fees and to negotiate less vigorously for better terms. While the Survey of Writers on which this study is based did not query writers on their household (rather than individual) income, a study of American authors undertaken by the Center for the Social Sciences at Columbia University found that the median income of authors' husbands was $26,000 in 1979, but the median income of authors' wives was only $4,000. While Canadian figures would no doubt be somewhat different, the basic findings would probably be applicable to this country.

- Differences in income may also be attributable to the concentration of women in lower-paying specialities. For example, this study showed that 69 per cent of full-time male writers received income from radio or television, where remuneration tends to be higher, while only 43 per cent of the full-time female writers reported earnings from this source. More women than men (65 per cent versus 41 per cent) wrote for periodicals - a less remunerative occupation. It has also been suggested that women have a greater tendency to write children's books, which are generally not major income earners.

- It is possible that there were inequities in the quantity or quality of the works produced by the men and women who participated in the survey. In this context, it should be noted that the Survey of Writers did not measure the respondents' time commitment to writing activities, even among full-time writers. While these writers are known to have worked more than thirty hours a week (when active), it is impossible to determine the number of weeks worked during the income-earning period, and making comparisons under such conditions is risky at best. Perhaps the family responsibilities of some women reduce the time available for writing, and their lower incomes may be indicative of this.

These hypothetical reasons for the income difference are not meant to "explain away" the gap, but merely to suggest factors that may contribute to it based on available information. Whatever the reasons for the higher incomes of men, the fact remains that they are receiving a much larger portion of the monies paid to Canadian freelancers.

Appendix 1

Methodology

The membership of the eighteen unions and associations that participated in the study totaled 4,479 writers. From this group, a sample of 2,103 was selected, with probability of selection within regions approximately proportional to the size of the region. Of the questionnaires sent to the selected writers, 1,307 (62 per cent) were completed and returned to Statistics Canada.

Examination of the completed questionnaires showed that 262 writers did not meet the screening criteria for the definition of writers employed for the survey. In other words, 1,045 of those who returned their questionnaire met the study criteria. Individual records were weighted to bring them in line with the population levels for the survey. Consequently, the total number of writers (weighted) in the survey results is 3,185.

In attempting to identify Canadian freelance writers, the survey designers were faced with two basic problems: "targetting" the required population, and, once this was accomplished, sampling within this population. It was necessary to find the people in Canada who satisfy the definition of a writer, and to ensure that the population sampled was representative of freelance writers in general.

To solve the first problem, it is desirable to have a target population identical to the population about which conclusions will be drawn. However, compromises must often be made for practical reasons. In the case of the Survey of Writers, it was impossible to apply a universal definition to all Canadians, so the target population was restricted to writers who were members of one or more writers unions and associations. Thus, the sampling frame is incomplete, as Canadians who satisfied the definition of a writer but did not belong to one of these groups had no chance of being included in the sample. This is not perceived as a major limitation, however, since it appears that the majority of freelancers have joined one of these associations.

The second problem, of "representativeness" of response, arises with many social science surveys due to a lack of knowledge, a priori, of the population under consideration. In some surveys, a number of characteristics of people in the population under study are known in advance (from census tabulations or other sources), and this information can be used to select an appropriate sample and then to "weight" the resulting sample figures to population levels. The researcher can then have greater confidence that the survey results closely approximate the results that would have been obtained from a full census of writers. Lacking this information, we can only draw tentative conclusions from the data, under the assumption that the survey results are an accurate representation of the unknown population of writers.

Description of sample

The Writers Survey was a stratified probability sample of members of 18 writers associations and unions thought to be representative of the population of Canadian writers. Included in the survey were:

1. Académie canadienne-française
2. ACTRA (Writers groups)
3. Associations des auteurs des Cantons de l'Est
4. Auteurs canadiens pour la jeunesse
5. Canadian Authors Association
6. Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators and Performers
7. Centre d'essai des auteurs dramatiques
8. Guild of Canadian Playwrights
9. La Société des auteurs compositeurs
10. League of Canadian Poets
11. Les Écrivains de la Mauricie
12. Ontario Arts Council
13. Periodical Writers Association of Canada
14. Playwrights Canada
15. Société des écrivains canadiens
16. Union des écrivains québécois
17. Writers Federation of Nova Scotia
18. Writers Union

The sample was split into two broad strata, the first consisting of poets, playwrights, newspaper and magazine freelancers, and book authors, the second consisting primarily of book authors. In order to enable reliable estimates to be made at the regional level, these two major strata were sub-divided by region (Atlantic, Québec, Ontario, Prairies, British Columbia).

Appendix 2

Definitions

Writer - a person who was a member of one or more of the writers' unions and associations surveyed and who, in the five years prior to the survey (that is, since January 1974) satisfied at least one of the following criteria:

- had written at least one book of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that was published or in the process of being published for a general retail market (textbooks were excluded as they were not intended for retail markets); or
- had written at least one script for stage, cinema, radio or television, that had been produced or broadcast (excluded was work done as a paid employee of a producing agency); or
- had written at least three published short stories or poems; or
- had written ten or more articles, columns, or reviews published in a newspaper or magazine (excluded was work done as a paid employee of a newspaper or magazine).

Full-time Writer - a writer who spent more than 30 hours a week working as a writer in 1978 (excluding time spent writing as a paid employee).

Part-time Writer - a writer who spent less than 30 hours a week working as a writer in 1978 (excluding time writing as a paid employee).

Active Writer - a writer who had been active at any time since January 1974.

Years of Experience - the number of years since the individual began to earn money from work as a freelance writer.

Region of Residence - the region of Canada in which the writer was residing at the time of the Survey of Writers (October 1979).

Writing Language - the language in which the writer usually does his or her writing.

Place of Birth - whether a writer was born in Canada or outside Canada.

Level of Education - the highest level of formal education attained by individual writers.

Training as a Writer - the highest level of training as a writer completed by individual writers.

Age on Receipt of First Writing Income - the age at which individual writers began to earn money from their work as a writer (excluding money earned while writing as a paid employee).

Current Field of Activity - the field(s) of writing in which individual writers are currently active (excluding activities as a paid employee).

Principal Field of Activity - the category in which the majority of a writer's work falls - non-fiction, fiction, poetry or drama.

Proportion of Work Accepted for Publication - the proportion of work accepted for publication or production throughout the career of individual writers.

Limiting Factors on Success - the factor which individual writers consider to be most important in limiting their success as a writer.

Development Recommendations - the factor which individual writers consider to be most important for the immediate development of the literary field in Canada.

Number of Books Published - the number of books which individual writers have written and had published (excluding textbooks).

Number of Articles Published - the number of articles which individual writers have written and had published.

Script Writing Activity - the participation of individual writers in script writing for stage, cinema, radio or television.

Medium Employed for First Script - the medium in which a writer's initial script was first produced or broadcast.

Number of Scripts Written - the number of scripts written and produced for stage, cinema, radio or television.

Writing Income - the writer's total income from writing, including income from books, periodicals, radio and television, film and stage.

Total Income - refers to the sum of income from another job, books, magazine articles, earnings from radio and television, plays or films, as well as income from "other sources" (including grants, awards and prizes, editing, literary translation, etc.).

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Education, Science and Culture Division

Culture Sub-division

SURVEY OF WRITERS

7501A

Authority – Statistics Act, Chapter 15, Statutes of Canada 1970-71-72.

(Français au verso)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Definition of a Writer

The purpose of this survey is to gather information on the financial well-being of writers in Canada. For this survey, please consider yourself a writer only if, in the last five years (that is, since January 1974) you have:

1) written at least one book of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that was published or is being published for a general retail market (textbooks are excluded because they are not intended for retail markets); **OR**

2) written at least one script for stage, cinema, radio or television, that has been produced or broadcast (excluded is work done as a paid employee of a producing agency); **OR**

3) written at least three published short stories or poems; **OR**

4) written ten or more articles, columns, or reviews published in a newspaper or magazine (excluded is work done as a paid employee of a newspaper or magazine).

If you have not done any of these during the past five years, please answer the first question, then return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.

Note: If you work for a salary or wage, but in addition to your job have engaged in any of these activities during the past five years on a commission or freelance basis, please complete the questionnaire.

DIRECTIONS:

1. This questionnaire is divided into 8 sections:

A. Writing Activities	E. Writing Background
B. Books	F. Other Activities
C. Newspapers and Magazines	G. Background
D. Stage, Film, Radio and Television	H. Finances

Please complete each of these sections. A system of "GO TO" instructions will give you the necessary directions to complete the questionnaire. Note that not all questions may apply (i.e.: a poet might not answer the section on stage, radio and television), therefore just respond to those that do.

2. For many questions it is only necessary to mark a "√" in the appropriate box i.e. ☑

3. In a number of questions, the option "Other" is provided. This category should be used only if your answer cannot be found in the preceding choices. When using "Other" please write in your response beside the marked box in the space provided.

4. A stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

4-3232-75: 16-7-79

SECTION A. WRITING ACTIVITIES

Your Work:

1.(i) Have you been active as a writer at any time since January, 1974? (Please see the definition on page 1.)

001 Yes ☐1 No ☐2 →

1. (ii) Have you ever been active as a writer?

002 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

(iii) Please describe your current occupation in the space below: (Describe fully using at least three words).

003 _____

_____

Thank you for your cooperation. Please return the questionnaire in the envelope provided.

2. How would you describe the time you spent in calendar 1978 as a writer? (Please exclude any time spent writing as a paid employee).

004 Full-time occupation (More than 30 hours per week) ☐1 Part-time occupation (Less than 30 hours per week) ☐2 Not active in 1978 ☐3

3. In what year did you first begin to earn money from your work as a writer? (Please do not consider money earned while writing as a paid employee).

Year

005 19___

4. (i) In which media or forms has your writing ever been published or produced? (Check as many as applicable).

PRINT	ELECTRONIC	CINEMA	THEATRE
(a) 006 Books ☐1	(d) 009 Radio ☐1	(f) 011 ☐1	(g) 012 ☐1
(b) 007 Newspapers ☐1	(e) 010 Television ☐1		
(c) 008 Magazines ☐1			

(ii) Which of the media listed above has yielded most of your earnings as a writer since January 1974? (Choose one only).

013 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4 (e) ☐5 (f) ☐6 (g) ☐7

5. (i) In which field(s) of writing are you currently active? (Exclude activities as a paid employee) – (Check as many as applicable).

(a) 014 Non-Fiction ☐1 (b) 015 Fiction ☐1 (c) 016 Poetry ☐1 (d) 017 Drama ☐1

(ii) Into which of the above categories does the majority of your work fall? (Choose only one).

018 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4

6. (i) Do you currently have an agent?

019 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

(ii) Who looks after your subsidiary rights? (Such as translations, paperback, foreign sales) – (Check as many as applicable).

020 Editor ☐1
021 Publisher ☐1
022 Production Agent ☐1
023 Private Agent ☐1
024 Association ☐1
025 Myself ☐1
026 Other (please specify) _____ ☐1

7. Throughout your career, what proportion of your work has been accepted for publication or production?

027 Less than 25% ☐1 25%-50% ☐2 51%-75% ☐3 Over 75% ☐4

8. At any one time an individual is involved in different activities as a writer. Given your present situation as a writer, please indicate how much time you spend on the following activities:

		All or most of the time	Some of the time	Little or none of the time
Thinking and planning	028	☐1	☐2	☐3
Researching	029	☐1	☐2	☐3
Discussing ideas	030	☐1	☐2	☐3
Promoting my work	031	☐1	☐2	☐3
Writing	032	☐1	☐2	☐3
Other (please specify) _____ _____	033	☐1	☐2	☐3

SECTION B. BOOKS

1. Have you ever written a book? (If you have written only textbooks, go to question 9).

040 Yes ☐1 No ☐2 (GO TO QUESTION 1, SECTION C)

2. (i) Using the classification scheme that follows, indicate the number of books you have written and had published:

	In or since January 1974	Prior to January 1974	Total
	Number	Number	Number
(a) Non-fiction	041	047	053
(b) Fiction	042	048	054
(c) Drama	043	049	055
(d) Poetry	044	050	056
(e) Other (please specify) _____ _____	045	051	057
TOTAL	046	052	058

2.(ii) Which type of book listed above has generated the highest amount of revenue for you during the last five years? (Include all revenue from subsidiary rights).

059 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4 (e) ☐5

3. In what year did you finish writing your first published book? (Do not include books you have edited or textbooks).

Year

060 19___

4. In what year was this first book published?

Year

061 19___

062 ☐1 Has not been released yet (GO TO QUESTION 6).

Note: If you have only written one book, skip to question 6.

5. In what year did you finish writing your most recently published book? (Do not include books you have edited or textbooks).

Year

063 19___

6. (i) How important is each of the following factors in limiting your success as a writer?

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all
(a) Lack of interested publishers	064	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Poor promotion and marketing of books	065	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Lack of interested critics	066	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Lack of retail outlets	067	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) Buying of foreign editions of Canadian books by booksellers	068	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Unauthorized use of copyright	069	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(g) Limited audience for my work	070	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(h) Lack of good editors	071	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(i) Production delays	072	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(j) Competition from foreign authors	073	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(k) Lack of assignments	074	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(l) Other (please specify) _____	075	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

(ii) Which factor mentioned above is most important? (Choose one only).

076 (a) ☐01 (b) ☐02 (c) ☐03 (d) ☐04 (e) ☐05 (f) ☐06 (g) ☐07 (h) ☐08 (i) ☐09 (j) ☐10 (k) ☐11 (l) ☐12

7. (i) In your opinion, how important is each of the following factors to the immediate development of the literary field in Canada?

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all
(a) Revision of copyright laws, including restrictive photocopying	077	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Import restrictions on foreign works	078	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Government assistance for the publishing industry	079	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Income tax revisions	080	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) More public awards and grants for writers	081	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Improved public education and appreciation of Canadian literature	082	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(g) Compensation for authors for loan of their books from libraries	083	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(h) Institution of social benefits for writers, such as unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay	084	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(i) Freedom of information legislation	085	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(j) Government leadership in development and support of the arts	086	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(k) More Canadian books in libraries	087	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(l) Other (please specify)_____	088	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

(ii) Which factor mentioned above is most important? (Choose one only).

089 (a) ☐01 (b) ☐02 (c) ☐03 (d) ☐04 (e) ☐05 (f) ☐06 (g) ☐07 (h) ☐08 (i) ☐09 (j) ☐10 (k) ☐11 (l) ☐12

8. How many published books have you edited?

	Number in or since January 1974	Number prior to January 1974	Total
	091	092	093

090 None ☐1

9. How many textbooks have you written and had published?

	Number in or since January 1974	Number prior to January 1974	Total
	095	096	097

094 None ☐1

SECTION C. NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINES

1. Have you ever written material for newspapers or magazines? (Do not include work as a salaried writer).

100 Yes ☐1 No ☐2 (GO TO QUESTION 1, SECTION D)

2. In what year was your first freelance or commissioned article, review, column or short story published?

101 Year 19___

3. Using the classification scheme below, indicate the type and number of items from January 1974 to December 1978 you have had published in:

		Newspapers	General interest magazines*	Special interest magazines*
		Number	Number	Number
	Features	102	109	116
	Columns	103	110	117
	Reviews	104	111	118
If you have written only fiction or poetry skip to question D. 1	Fiction	105	112	119
	Poetry	106	113	120
	Other	107	114	121
	Total	108	115	122

*Definitions: General interest: such as Maclean's, Reader's Digest
Special interest: such as Harrowsmith

4. How many articles have you written and had published in the following categories in:

	Calendar 1978	January 1974 to December 1978
	Number	Number
Features	123	126
Columns	124	127
Review	125	128

5. (i) In your opinion, how important is each of the following factors **in limiting** your success as a newspaper or periodical freelance writer?

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all
(a) Not paid enough considering amount of time involved	129	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Insufficient use of written contracts	130	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Censorship	131	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Industry too centralized-regional writers bypassed on regional stories	132	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) Cannot sell pieces on certain subject areas that interest me	133	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Shortage of assignments	134	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(g) Limited market due to lack of variety of magazines	135	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(h) Other (please specify) _____	136	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

(ii) Which factor mentioned above is most important? (Choose one only).

137 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4 (e) ☐5 (f) ☐6 (g) ☐7 (h) ☐8

6. (i) In your opinion, how important is each of the following factors in improving the situation of the freelance writer in Canada?

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all
(a) Revision of copyright laws	138	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Income tax revisions	139	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Import restrictions on foreign publications	140	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Access to grants for non-fiction writing	141	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) Improved freedom of/access to information legislation	142	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Institution of social benefits for writers (unemployment insurance, pensions, vacation pay, etc.)	143	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(g) Other (please specify) _____	144	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

(ii) Which factor mentioned above is most important? (Choose one only).

145 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4 (e) ☐5 (f) ☐6 (g) ☐7

SECTION D. STAGE, FILM, RADIO AND TELEVISION

1. Have you ever written any scripts for stage, film, radio or television?

150 Yes ☐1 No ☐2 (GO TO QUESTION 1, SECTION E)

2. In what year did you finish writing your first script for stage, film, radio or television?

Year

151 19___

3. In which medium was this script first produced or broadcast?

152 Stage ☐1 Cinema ☐2 Radio ☐3 Television ☐4
Never produced ☐5

4. Using the classification scheme set out below, please indicate the type and number of scripts written and produced:

	Number in or since January 1974	Number previous to January 1974
Stage	153	158
Cinema	154	159
Radio	155	160
Television	156	161
Other (please specify) _____	157	162

5. Who is the intended audience for your scripts?

If you have not written for the stage, skip to question 1, section E

		Juvenile (up to age 14)		Adult
Stage	163	☐1	168	☐1
Cinema	164	☐1	169	☐1
Radio	165	☐1	170	☐1
Television	166	☐1	171	☐1
Other (please specify) _____	167	☐1	172	☐1

6. Did you participate in the actual production of your most recent script?

First production

173 Yes ☐1 No ☐2
Not applicable ☐3

Subsequent productions

174 Yes ☐1 No ☐2
Not applicable ☐3

7. (i) In your opinion, how important is each of the following factors in limiting your success as a playwright?

		Very important	Somewhat important	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all
(a) Lack of formal arrangements between theatres or producing agencies and writers	175	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(b) Lack of available production agencies, outlets or theatres	176	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(c) Theatres produce established plays instead of attempting new works	177	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(d) Theatres produce foreign rather than Canadian material	178	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(e) Difficulties with method of payments (delayed, no advances, etc.)	179	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4
(f) Other (please specify) _____	180	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4

(ii) Which of the factors cited above is most important? (Choose one only).

181 (a) ☐1 (b) ☐2 (c) ☐3 (d) ☐4 (e) ☐5 (f) ☐6

SECTION E. WRITING BACKGROUND

1. (i) What is the highest level of training as a writer you have completed?

		Check only one
No formal training as a writer beyond high school level (GO TO QUESTION 2)	190	☐1
University degree or diploma at the Master's or Ph.D level in creative writing, journalism, drama or other related arts program		☐2
University degree or diploma at the undergraduate level in creative writing, journalism, drama or other related arts program		☐3
Diploma or certificate from a community college, CEGEP in journalism, creative writing, drama or other related arts program		☐4
Credit or non credit courses from university, community college or CEGEP		☐5
Workshops and courses organized by writers' group, unions, coops, etc.		☐6
Other (please specify _____)		☐7

(ii) Where was this highest level of training completed?

191 Inside Canada ☐1 Outside Canada ☐2

(iii) Did you find this level of formal training useful to develop your skills as a writer?

192 Yes, very useful ☐1 Yes, useful ☐2 No, not useful ☐3

2. Reflecting back on your career, were there any particular individuals who encouraged you in your efforts to be a writer?

	As a hobby		As a profession	
Parents	193	☐1	202	☐1
Other relatives	194	☐1	203	☐1
Other writers	195	☐1	204	☐1
Publishers, producers	196	☐1	205	☐1
Editors, directors	197	☐1	206	☐1
Teachers	198	☐1	207	☐1
Friends	199	☐1	208	☐1
Others _____	200	☐1	209	☐1
No one that I can remember	201	☐1	210	☐1

3. Were either of your parents actively involved in the production or the promotion of the arts?

211 Yes ☐1 No ☐2 I do not know ☐3

Were either of your parents writers?

212 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

SECTION F. OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. In addition to your activities as a self-employed writer, have you held any job paying a wage or salary for the period of January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1978?

220
- Yes, full-time (More than 30 hours per week) ☐1
- Yes, part-time (Less than 30 hours per week) ☐2

} GO TO QUESTION 2

- No ☐3

} GO TO QUESTION 3

2. Which of the following categories best describes this job?
(If you have held more than one job during the last 12 months, please describe the one you held for the longest period of time).

Teaching literature, creative writing, journalism or other related courses	221	☐01
Teaching not related to writing		☐02
Publishing, Editing		☐03
Writing (public relations, copy writing, report writing, etc.)		☐04
Translating		☐05
Acting, Directing, Producing		☐06
Management and Administration		☐07
Other professional including health, natural or social sciences, humanities		☐08
Technical, Skilled (e.g. machinist)		☐09
Clerical, Sales, Service, Labourer		☐10
Other (please specify) _____		☐11

3. Have you had commissions or contracts for other types of related activities during the past 12 months?

		Yes	No
Ghost writing	222	☐1	☐2
Public relations writing (speeches, promotional material, etc.)	223	☐1	☐2
Technical writing (reports, etc.)	224	☐1	☐2
Research	225	☐1	☐2
Translating	226	☐1	☐2
Editing	227	☐1	☐2
Other (please specify) _____	228	☐1	☐2

SECTION G. BACKGROUND

1. Sex:
230 Male ☐1 Female ☐2

2. Year of birth
231 Year: ____

3. Were you born in Canada?
232 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

4. Citizenship:
233 Canadian ☐1; Landed immigrant ☐2; Other ☐3

5. What language do you usually speak in your home?
234 French ☐1 English ☐2 Other ☐3 (Specify) _____

6. In what language do you usually do your writing for publication or production?
235 French ☐1 English ☐2 Other ☐3 (specify) _____

7. In which area do you presently reside?
236

Newfoundland	☐10	Ontario	☐35	Northwest Territories	☐60
Prince Edward Island	☐11	Manitoba	☐46	Yukon	☐61
Nova Scotia	☐12	Saskatchewan	☐47	Outside Canada	☐70
New Brunswick	☐13	Alberta	☐48		
Quebec	☐24	British Columbia	☐59		

8. Have you moved in the past 12 months?

237 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

9. What is your highest level of formal education? (If not Canadian-educated, select the category which best describes your educational attainment).

Elementary or less	238	☐01
Some high school		☐02
Completed high school		☐03
Trade level training or vocation, (e.g. plumber, carpenter)		☐04
Post-secondary semi-professional, including technical institutes, teachers' college, classical colleges, etc.		☐05
Some university, no degree completed		☐06
Bachelor's or diploma, completed		☐07
Professional degree, (e.g., law, dentistry, medicine), completed		☐08
Master's or PhD, completed		☐09
Other (please specify _____)		☐10

10. What is the highest level of formal education completed by your parents?

		Father		Mother
Elementary or less	239	☐1	240	☐1
Secondary		☐2		☐2
Trade or vocational		☐3		☐3
Other post-secondary non-university		☐4		☐4
University		☐5		☐5
I do not know		☐6		☐6

SECTION H. FINANCES

1. What was your gross income before deductions (e.g. income tax, research expenses, etc.) from **all sources** for the period of January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1978?

$ 5,000 and less	250	☐1
$ 5,001 - $10,000		☐2
$10,001 - 15,000		☐3
$15,001 - 20,000		☐4
$20,001 - 30,000		☐5
$30,001 - 50,000		☐6
Over $50,000		☐7

2. Do you share your regular living expenses, such as food and accommodation with someone else?

251 Yes ☐1 No ☐2

3. For the same period you reported **gross** income before deductions (i.e. January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1978), indicate the income and expenditures for the sources listed below:

INCOME	Dollars
	252
1. Salary and wages from your other employment (refer to section F, question 1)	253
Books	
2. From royalties from the sale of all published books (exclude textbooks)	254
3. Commissions for books or advances against royalties not included in the above	255
4. Subsidiary sources of income from books (include all income from sale of subsidiary rights, such as translations, film rights, paperback, foreign sales, etc.)	256
5. All income from textbook sales (royalties, commissions, subsidiary sources)	257
Total Book Income	258
Periodicals	
6. From the sale of other written material (published in newspaper, periodicals, magazines, etc.)	259
Radio, Television	
7. From fees for writing of scripts or programs for (a) radio	260
(b) television	261
8. From residual or repeat fees for refuse of programs on (a) radio	262
(b) television	263
Total Radio and Television Income	264
Film	
9. Fees for writing of feature film screenplays	265
10. Other (please specify) _____	266
Total Film Income	267
Stage	
11. Performance royalties or box office percentage from production of play	268
12. Commissions/advance against royalties not included in the above	269
13. Other (please specify) _____	270
Total Stage Income	271
Other Income	
14. Grants, awards and prizes	272
15. Commissions and fees for other writing (public relations, ghost writing)	273
16. Income from editing	274
17. Fees for literary translation	275
18. Fees for speaking engagements, reading tours, radio and T.V. appearances	276
19. Other (please specify) _____ Examples: Pensions, family allowances, etc.	277
Total Other Income	278
TOTAL INCOME	

EXPENDITURES

1. Includes research, typing, photocopying, supplies, business-related travel, etc. (All expenses related to writing deductible for income tax purposes)	279

4. Please estimate what proportion of your gross income was derived from your writing for the calendar year listed below:

	1977	1976	1975
None	280 ☐1	281 ☐1	282 ☐1
Less than 25%	☐2	☐2	☐2
25% – 49%	☐3	☐3	☐3
50% – 74%	☐4	☐4	☐4
75% and above	☐5	☐5	☐5
I do not know	☐6	☐6	☐6

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION. WE WELCOME ANY COMMENTS YOU WISH TO MAKE REGARDING THE FIELD OF WRITING OR THE SITUATION OF WRITERS IN CANADA.

NOTE

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE STAMPED SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED.

NOTE

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